

CQ de WA2LQO

Seventy One Years: 1944 -2015

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My Freshman Schedule at CCNY

by Bob Wexelbaum

Having completed all tests successfully except a math test, I was accepted into the engineering course at the City College of New York (CCNY) Manhattan Campus starting in September 1951. I was always believed to be a math wiz in High School, so failing the math test was a terrible disappointment. It meant that I would have to take a no credit Algebra class before I could take the five credit Analytic Geometry and Differential Calculus 101 class that is requirement for all engineering students. I found out, all too late, that knowledge of differential calculus would be needed for this required Physics course that I had to schedule if I expected to complete college in four years.

The scheduling of courses for each student was a complex project itself. It was not accomplished by college administrators or computerized as it may be today. I was given a booklet showing the times and teachers for the engineering courses. I also was given a menu of the required courses for any engineering freshman. I was lead into a large lecture hall where the courses which were filled up and no longer available were noted on a blackboard and new courses that had opened up to meet some of the great demands had to be added, which had not been printed in the schedule booklet.

Before starting the scheduling ordeal I was recruited into the Reserve Officer's Training Corp (ROTC), by a US Army recruitment officer. I had no qualms about joining the ROTC, because it seemed to offer many advantages to me at that time. I was already a MARS member and willing to pledge to become a military man when, and if, I graduated from CCNY. I needed a winter coat and new shoes, which would be supplied free to me as part of an Army uniform. I could use the money that my parents had set aside for a coat and shoes for other purposes. I might impress my friends with the uniform. This was an easy decision. It did however require scheduling ROTC classes, which further limited the times to be selected for required courses.

The scheduling lecture hall was bedlam. The chatter noise could be compared with that on the Wall Street stock market floor. Freshmen, with lowest priority, were the last to select from the few courses that were still open for enrollment. Higher class students, who were given more priority, remained there to schedule the courses that they had failed and often to warn freshmen about avoiding the teachers who had failed them. In addition to the Math Course, I had to schedule Physics, Chemistry, English, Social Studies, Physical Training, ROTC and a Speech Class. The Speech Class was required because I was believed to be unable to sometimes pronounce els properly. When I thought that I had a reasonable program set up I had to get on line to have it checked and entered by a volunteer checker. While I was waiting on line course possibilities were being removed on the blackboard that closed out my selections. Thus more than once I had to start over from scratch. I found out that the Physics and Chemistry courses each required setting up for three separate time slots. Each had to include a recitation class, a lab class and a lecture hall class. I also had to select an English class. There were essay classes, English history classes, Shakespeare classes, etc. I was warned about the essay class because it required submitting many original essays that would be as long as this newsletter, but I had no choice in the matter. For Social Studies, I also had no choice, and had to take a course called Humanities 101. The Humanities course was the easiest for me.

The one good thing about scheduling is that there was an open time slot for all students on every Thursday afternoon. It was then that students could meet with a sports club, a Greek society, a religious or political culture group, etc. and for me the CCNY Amateur Radio Society, W2HJ. CCNY had once had a Communist Club, but it was banned in 1951. I learned from other engineering students that over 30% of the freshman class was expected to fail enough subjects to be dropped out of the Engineering program. Less than 50 % of those who entered were expected to graduate CCNY to earn any type of bachelor's degree.

In order to fit a working program together I had to select Professor Gaudin for my Physics recitation teacher. I was warned about him by students who knew him. He was a Frenchman, whose wife was a French professor at CCNY. He spoke with the kind of French accent and mannerism that latter would be portrayed by Peter Sellers in the Pink Panthers movies. He always carried a folded umbrella and was once seen stamping it on the sidewalk at the sight of a tow truck that was pulling a wrecked car at a very inefficient angle.

I was overwhelmed when I actually followed my busy schedule. There is no room to comment about all of my efforts here. I'll write more about that next month. I lived with my parents in a three room apartment. My mother's condition was getting worse. Every night she had crying or laughing fits and became more difficult to communicate with. This made it very difficult to study or do the required homework. I know that this is no excuse, because others with similar conditions had graduated. However I found it impossible for me to do all the required homework and studying that the courses required, while still doing some TV and car radio service work and making some local and DX ham radio QSOs. I also was active in RACES. Although I had no car I accompanied other Hams during drills, operating their radios while they drove their cars. I used public transportation to get to and from CCNY, until I began to travel to school with Billy Steinsmith, Lester Lipsky and another guy whose name I don't remember in Billy's father's car. Billy had been in my P.S. 77 classes, but he went to Stuyvesant High School when I was at Monroe. Lester had been in some of my classes at Monroe, but not at P.S. 77. He had skipped some classes because he was an excellent student. Thus he was younger than me. Billy was destined to drop out of CCNY, but Lester earned a BS in Mechanical Engineering there.

It was hardest for me to do my Physics homework. I often came to class unprepared and hoped that Professor Gaudin would not call on me to solve a homework problem on the blackboard. One day he calls out, "The next problem I call to be done by...let me see...Wechselbumps..." I hadn't even tried it but the thought of doing it on the blackboard may be what started the hand tremor that still disables me. After looking at my effort, the professor said, "Poof...Wechselbumps... Go back to grade school...That's grade school work !" Now college instructors can't put that kind of classroom pressure on students. I know because I eventually earned a BSEE and an MS in Education from schools where it was improper to lower any student's self-esteem.

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PRESIDENT'S NOTE by ED GELLENDER, WB2EAV

Last year's attempt by the ARRL to have the US congress expand the FCC PRB-1 edict to include private homeownership associations, titled HR4969, expired with the end of last year. The ARRL has renewed it in the new session of congress under the title of HR1303, and they are making a full-court-press to bring it to fruition in this congress. Several local congressional representatives have already signed on, including Steve Israel and Peter King. This time they may actually make it happen. Let's see.

I have received suggestions from Hudson Division director Mike Lisenco, N2YBB, that it would be a good idea if local hams were to send thank-you e-mails to their congressmen who have already signed on, and requests from those who haven't yet done so. If you are interested, but did not receive any of Mike's missives, let me know at wb2eav@yahoo.com

Now that spring is not only officially here, but weather is slowly becoming more spring-like, it is a wonderful thing. We have had the ground constantly covered with a heavy blanket of snow for almost two months until everyone is just about sick of it. Now I look and the only places I see snow are a lesson in earth science, where trees or other structures have kept the snow to the north constantly in the shade. I do not mind winter weather, but this winter has been getting on my nerves and I am glad that we are finally moving on.

**GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 3/18/2015
By Karen, W2ABK**

The meeting was opened by Gordon at 5:30 PM

TREASURER'S REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV

Finances continue to be in good shape.

REPEATER REPORT – Gordon, KB2UB

We're awaiting for the weather to improve.

NET REPORT – Karen, W2ABK

Thursday night net at 8:15 PM on 146.745 MHz had 2 check-ins.

Thursday night net at 8:30 PM on 145.330 MHz had 2 check-ins, but unable to hear W2ABK.

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

VE REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV

The March VE Session was cancelled. The April VE session may be canceled.

PROGRAM.

A relaxing social meeting with coffee and donuts.

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

Net Controller: Karen, W2ABK

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 3rd 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 at Haypath Park on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 12:00 Noon *Meetings may be cancelled or relocated. Check the website.*

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

This column, "Internet Link of the Month for Internerds", was started so long ago that it is now getting sort of obsolete. I say that because there are now so many ways to link to subjects of interest by clicking on icons rather than linking by using http:// type addresses. This is the popular way to find things with the newer operating systems and the newer mobile devices, which feature apps that help you move your fingers through the multi-colored icons on the home pages to locate them. You no longer have to be an Internerd to scan the Internet because everyone is doing it now. My favorite default homepage is MSN, however I sometimes call up Google or Yahoo homepages.

On the Yahoo homepage there is a feature which can be used to link to cartoons. It is in the lower right hand corner of the page. There you can find many syndicated cartoons. Some are ones that are in "Newsday" and others are cartoons that are regularly featured in other newspapers. Once you find what interests you, you can enlarge it so as to read the words on the cartoon "balloons". You can also find political cartoons there, if you know the authors that draw the ones that you like from their own political points of view. I won't get into any political stuff here. I will however draw your attention to the Dilbert cartoons. That is because they remind those of us who have worked in engineering offices how some managers and bosses hire, plan and think. What Scott Adams, who draws Dilbert, thinks about engineering supervision may seem to be exaggerated in order to be satirical and humorous, but I have found it to be an accurate depiction of some of the project leaders and some of the engineering types that I have come across in my own experience. I will not name names or even say what companies it has applied to in my past. Obviously Scott Adams has been inspired by his own experience. He was born in Windham, NY in 1957. He started drawing cartoons at the age of six. He holds an MBA in Economics, but he worked closely with telecommunications engineers in white collar offices.

Hams are familiar with the Dilbert cartoon which showed an engineer asking a female, "Do you think it would make me sexier if I got an amateur radio license?" The answer was, "It would give me goose bumps." This was obviously a put-down for us hams, in my opinion, but there was some hope that it was not meant to be sarcastic by some hams who weren't familiar with Adams usual satire and not exactly sure what Adams meant by it. His e-mail address was in the edge of a cartoon frame, so GARC member, Paul Chalson, WA2FOF, sent him an e-mail asking what that Dilbert cartoon really meant in relation to ham radio. Adams replied with one sentence, "It means whatever you think it means."

PUZZLE

This month's question is:-

What is the advantage of using a trap antenna?

- A. It has a high directivity gain
- B. It has high gain
- C. It minimizes harmonic radiation
- D. It may be useful for multiband operation

Last month's question was:-

What is the only amateur band that does not permit the transmission of phone or image emissions?

- A. 160 meters
- B. 60 meters
- C. 30 meters
- D. 17 meters

Answer: The Correct answer is C.

GARC Officers

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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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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 2015 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 ARRL-VEC or W5YI-VEC <http://www.arrl.org> or <http://www.w5yi.org>. All VECs use the same Q & A pools. There will be no VE Session in April.

Editorial

I am sorry to admit that this newsletter is late due to my own fault. Ed got the President's Message to me early but due to my own conflicts I am late getting it out.

The local politicians have sponsored a bill that is designed to make the use of ham transmitters and antennas mandated by the federal government, even in privately run communities. I don't know how they could enforce such a policy in the real world. I say that because it is impossible for our government to enforce federal laws that would enforce serving gays, blacks or minorities in all privately owned stores and restaurants. Should private establishments be exempt from laws, when they conflict with religious beliefs? I don't know if there are any religions that prohibit the use ham radio equipment, but if there are they might conflict with a government mandate to allow for ham operation, among groups that now ban the use of automobiles. We have to clearly define what is public, what is private and what should be enforced by government. This is never going to be a simple task because some states have the rights to be more selective about federal laws. They say that the US Constitution gave them that right when the Congress first met. The reason for the separation of church and state in the United States was not to eliminate government control of religious groups. The United States could never be united if there weren't exceptions made by states for the different Christian groups that existed in the original 13 colonies. Although the federal government did not want to demand that any one Christian group would dominate government policy, this did not prevent each state from giving priority to the major religious sect within that state. To eliminate this conflict, each state is responsible for policies that may involve education, health care, and safety that overlap with federal mandates. Politicians must often follow policies that their majority of constituents demand. 73, Bob W2ILP (Ignoring Local Policies?)

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DEPRESSION

The news has been full of the disastrous crash of a German airliner that caused the death of 140 people. The mangled cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and the flight data recorder (FDR) have been found in the wreckage. Note that they are not black boxes. They are orange boxes. Black boxes house communications, navigational and instrumentation equipment, not the CVRs or FDRs that must be located in wreckage to help determine the cause of crashes. The co-pilot locked the pilot out of the cockpit and put the aircraft into a high velocity dive. This is what has been confirmed by the orange boxes, but why did the co-pilot want to commit suicide? That is a question that has been alleged more gradually from his doctor's and from the German airline's records. There are many reasons why a man may become extremely depressed enough to take his own life but few that are so extreme as to wanting to take the lives of many others with him. I will list ones I know of here.

1. Depression about the break-up by a beloved girlfriend.
2. Depression about a painful disease that is incurable.
3. Depression about losing or expecting to lose employment.
4. Depression about one's religious or ethical failure or guilt.
5. Depression about present or future economic difficulties.

I know of people who have suffered from each of the 5 above and I must admit that I have suffered from some of them myself. I guess that I am not the type who could be brave enough to kill myself for any reason. When I was in Korea one of the soldiers in my Company became extremely depressed and other soldiers began to poke fun at him when he stared into space and could no longer be communicated with. The First Sergeant noticed his depression and set up an appointment for him to see a psychiatrist. Unfortunately he committed suicide before he could get to see the psychiatrist. He had been driven to Eighth Army Headquarters in Seoul to speak with a Chaplain, but when he returned to our compound in Yong Dong Po, he was even more depressed. The trouble was that some soldiers had faked depression in order to get home before their 16 month tour of duty would be over and this hurt those who were really depressed. The depressed soldier was made exempt from guard duty and was not allowed to carry any loaded weapons. He went to a soldier who was on guard duty and said that the guard was wanted in the orderly room and that he was sent to relieve him. He took the guard's carbine, put the muzzle in his mouth, and shot off the back of his head. When the First Sergeant, who was a combat veteran, was awakened from his sleep he was told about the depressed soldier's suicide. "I would never have believed that ----- had the guts to kill himself." He then went back to sleep. --w2ilp-- Page 6