



**CQ**  
de WA2LQO

DECEMBER 2008 VOL.81, No. 12

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**\*\*\*A 2008 Holiday Party will be our December GARC Meeting\*\*\***  
*(Please read President's Note for details.)*

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## **HIRAM PERCY MAXIM**

**By Bob Wexelbaum, W2ILP**

Last month I wrote about Hiram Stevens Maxim, who was Hiram Percy Maxim's father. This month I will write about Hiram Percy. After researching much relative history, I remembered that I have a book that is his detailed biography. It was written by a historian named Alice Clink Schumacher, and was at one time sold by the ARRL. Schumacher had researched using information gained from many sources, including Maxim's relatives, business associates and friends. If you can get the book, you can learn about more details than I can write in this treatise. Anyway, I reread it and it made more sense to me after having studied Percy's dad in detail. H.P. Maxim was born on September 2, 1869. He had inherited his father's innovative genius, as well as his father's sense of humor and ironic propensity for practical joking. Unlike his erratic dad, H.P. Maxim was a patient and understanding boss, and this eventually earned him the title of "The beloved gentleman". Although Percy's dad had gone to Europe when Percy was 12 years old, (H.S. Maxim eventually divorced Percy's mom and never returned to his American family) the formative impressions and practical education that Percy had obtained were keys to his unique genius and personality. Before I get into his inventions, let me recount a story from the book that illustrates his father's sense of humor. It is among many similar stories. Percy's family had moved 33 times before he was 12 years old, everywhere from Maine and Connecticut to Brooklyn, NY. Percy's father had apprenticed Percy to work as his helper as soon as Percy was able to use his hands (I dunno if there were child labor laws then) thus Percy became familiarized with farm, factory and laboratory work. His father also helped both Percy and his two sisters with their school work, especially with mathematics, but it is interesting to learn that Maxim's dad often lied to his son by originating supernatural tales. In 1877, when the Maxim family found a peach tree growing in their back yard in Brooklyn, Percy wanted to know why the peach tree wasn't bearing any peaches. His father said that if it was fertilized by a dead cat it would immediately bear peaches. Percy took his father's words seriously. Although the family never expected him to do so, he sought a dead cat with the tenacity of a DXCC contender with 99 foreign QSLs searching for the elusive number 100. Finally Percy found a rotted dead cat corpse and schlepped it home to his father, who helped him bury it beneath the peach tree. When Percy came home from school the next day, there was a bushel basket full of fresh peaches beneath the tree. Apparently H.S. Maxim had managed to buy them out of season at great expense to justify his myth. From such stories we can better understand the man who would invent the legendary Wouff Hong, Rettysnitch and Uggerumph, while at the same time

## **HIRAM PERCY MAXIM (continued)**

seriously following the development of modern technology as a radio amateur (even before there were many commercial radio operators) and working on the transformation of “horseless carriages” to automobiles. He has gotten many patents for automotive car innovations, but had to hire George G. Selden, who had patented features of gasoline powered autos, although Selden had never built a working gas engine or car himself. Their work was financed by the Pope Manufacturing Company. Maxim was a professional Electrical Engineer, having graduated from a two year course at MIT at the age of 16. His earliest attempt in automotive development was to mount a crude gas engine on a tricycle. He wrestled with the electrical ignition and gas-air carburetion problems that exist when designing internal combustion engines, developing model after model of improved engines and vehicles. When he entered one of his primitive cars in a car race, he arrived late because the car had broken down and had to be repaired on the way to the race. When he finally got to the race everyone was waiting for him because most of the other cars never got there, and the few that did couldn't get started. An exception was a Stanley Steamer. The Steamer was at first in the lead...but when it started to run out of steam pressure, Maxim overtook it and easily won the race. Maxim never mass produced his cars, but a few were sold to wealthy people at the then unheard of price of \$3000. Maxim himself was called on to fix his cars in the field if they failed to run, and he sometimes found that they were sabotaged by his rivals. Early cars were not immune to disastrous accidents, especially because roads were unpaved and were only meant to provide for horse travel. The cars were open and offered no protection to their drivers. In spite of all of the pitfalls, Maxim succeeded in developing practical carburetors, ignition systems, throttles, and inventing the automobile muffler. Maxim is also credited with the steering wheels of American automobiles being on the opposite side of the car than those of the European cars. The auto muffler design also led to the development of a silencer for guns, as well as mufflers for other noise making machinery. Edison had blamed Maxim's father for making lethal machine guns. When Westinghouse made an electric chair that used AC voltage to execute a murderer, Edison also blamed AC for killing people, by saying that unlike his rivals Edison had never invented anything that would kill people. I guess that Percy never wanted to invent killing machines but the gun silencer was seen by many to be a weapon of quiet destruction that might be used by gangsters as well as Armies. The Polk Corporation later became The Electric Vehicle Company, although most of its car models were powered by gasoline engines. The inventors of that day believed that the cars of the future would be run by electric motors, because gasoline was deemed too dangerous and modern electricity was at that time first beginning to be used to power both lights and machinery almost everywhere that natural gas or steam had formerly been used. The few electric vehicles that were made in the early 1900s included buses and delivery wagons. An example of an early electric buggy design: - Lamps 22 Volts...Bell operated by a push button in control handle...24 cell batteries in 6 trays of 4 each. Top speed: 20 mph. Range in miles per battery charge: 50 miles at top speed, 73.3 miles at third speed. Total weight: 1500 pounds (650 pounds was for batteries). Advertised cost for operating in 1905: \$31.50 per month, as opposed to using a wagon with three horses, each at 82 cents per day, which would total more than twice the cost of operating the electric vehicle! Maxim's vehicles used parts from The Belden Auto Transportation Company of Pittsburg and from the Olds Motor Works of Lansing, Michigan. A fellow named Henry Ford was watching. We know now that the automobile industry eventually moved from Hartford, CT to Detroit. It is ironic that since that year, 1905, when Dr. Lee DeForest invented the vacuum tube triode, electronic devices of many types beyond expectations have been developed...but sadly the long predicted development of practical inexpensive all electric battery operated cars remains in the works at the major car makers to this day, (perhaps with government bail-out money) with most of the very same technical and economic limitations that had existed in H.P. Maxim's days.

*I'll write more about H.P. Maxim in future newsletters when space permits.*

**PRESIDENT'S NOTE by ED GELLENDER, WB2EAV**  
**December 2008**

Hank W2ZZE has been quite ill but is now on the mend. Let us give him and his family our best wishes and prayers for a quick recovery and a good holiday season.

The Bethpage repeater is always very quiet. The antenna height leaves a lot to be desired, so it does not have the range of other repeaters. I always entertain myself once or twice a day by keying it up and throwing out my call sign. I never get an answer. Imagine my surprise the other day when I was on the way to work and keyed up the repeater...then...nothing at all. When I got to work, I couldn't see the antenna over building 14. I walked around towards the side and saw the antenna dangling over the side of the building. I notified Northrop Grumman maintenance. Apparently the antenna is mounted on a pipe which actually has two parts held together by a coupling which rusted through. I put a work order in for repair and expected to do quite a bit of waiting. Lunchtime Dec 2nd I idly looked up and saw the antenna standing up proudly. I turned the repeater back on and things seemed to work fine. I touched up the settings on the combined VHF antenna coupler/ SWR bridge that I had put in the transmitter output line. Feeling pretty satisfied, I went over to maintenance to thank them, and the poor fellow went into shock because he was so unused to hearing compliments. I then learned that we are not there yet. The repeater coverage was terrible and I was taking measurements when I noticed the PL-259 at the bottom of the coax up to the antenna was wet.....and I was indoors. Water is obviously getting in at the antenna and wicking it's way down. Trundled back to maintenance; Probably will have to replace the coax.

It is getting towards the end of the year and 2009 dues are coming up. The usual dues are \$20 a year. Family membership is \$25, and for out of town retirees it is \$10. We have been pretty laid back in the past but we have had some additional expenses lately, and the money comes in handy. Also, some prefer getting this newsletter by e-mail or reading it on our website...If that includes you be sure to let me know, so that we can save printing and postage costs. Let me say that we fully intend to continue mailing printed copies to all of our members who want them for the foreseeable future.

The holiday party is set for 5:30 PM, Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, at Bertucci's on Rte 110, just north of the Northern State Parkway...Same place as last year. They serve a nice Italian meal, from appetizer to dessert, in a nice atmosphere for just under \$30 per person including tax and tip (alcohol extra at cash bar). Everyone was quite pleased last year. Bring the XYL, or anyone else you wish. Tell them I promise that we will keep the arcane jargon that might make them roll their eyes to a minimum. It would really be helpful if I can get some idea of what size group to expect. Please try to reach me at wb2eav@yahoo.com or 516-575-0013, so that I can keep a tally and give the restaurant some idea of what to expect. We don't want to be a small group at a huge, empty table any more than we want to be stuffed on top of each other.

**GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**  
**MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 11/19/08**

By Karen, KC2OPX, secretary.

**The meeting was called to order by Gordon at 5:45 PM.**

**TREASURERS REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV**  
Finances continue to be in good shape.

**REPEATER REPORT Gordon, KB2UB**  
Repeaters are unchanged..

**VE REPORT – Bob, W2ILP**  
There was no VE session, since no applicants had applied.

**NET REPORT- Zack, WB2PUE**  
Sunday morning net was good, about 7 or 8 check ins.  
Thursday night net was good , about 4 or 5 check-ins.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Since there were no nominations, all incumbents were reelected for 2009; three board members whose positions are expiring will become 3 year board members and two 2 year board members will continue as 2 year board members.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

We are planning to have our holiday party at Bertucci's again.

## **PROGRAM**

Lenny the meteorologist gave a presentation about wind shear and about hurricanes and how they are named. He explained about the category numbers of hurricanes, how wide and long they are and their wind speeds. Suffolk County is a strong wind field. This requires preparation for evacuation, emergency power, etc. especially for hospitals and nursing homes. There must be cooperation during emergencies. Lenny showed a video of Hurricane Andrew which was a freak storm which struck the Miami, Florida area from east to west, and did not travel north along the east coast.

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM**

## **GARC NETS:**

**40 Meters: 7.289 MHz at 7:30 AM EST Sundays.**

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

**145.330 MHz (-600 kHz) at 8:30 PM EST Thursdays**

**[Tone for both repeaters is 136.5 Hz] (ARES/RACES) Mondays**

## **MEETINGS**

General Meetings of the GARC are held on the third Wednesday of each month, starting at 5:30 PM. The meetings are usually held at the Ellsworth Allen Park in Farmingdale. Driving directions and maps 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 eight days before the General Meeting.

## **GARC WEB SITE**

The web site of the GARC 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.

<b>INTERNET LINK OF THE MONTH FOR INTERNERDS</b>
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I thank Dave, AB2EF for suggestions that he recently set to me for web sites that we all should explore. Some of his suggestions were for technical stuff but the one I am using this month is more for laughs. Many of us need to laugh more and don't want to hear technical lectures. This month's web site is a Mountain Dew commercial. I don't normally like to do commercials here but this one is about lightning and ham radio field operations...among other activities that might attract lightning. I hope that you enjoy it as much as I did. It is:-

<http://www.mountaindew.com/#/video/miscvideo/lightning.php>

## **PUZZLE**

**Here is another cryptogram: NVR NGQ LJMV MVR DREM SUD JQ MVR BUTQMOX JE MVR**

**ZJBR AOREJPRQM, GWW VR VGE MU PU JE CRM TA RZROX NUOQJQC GQP EGX “**

**VUL'E MVR AOREJPRQM?” --VJLL OUCROE--**

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**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**  
All the members of GARC (we hope!)

CQ de WA2LQO is published monthly by the Grumman Amateur Radio Club for its members and friends. Send articles and amateur equipment advertisements to: W2ILP. Articles may be sent by e-mail or postal mail. They can be in MS Word format or simply in plain text. Articles will only be edited when permission is granted by the author.

**ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS**  
For insertion to the WA2LQO website, information may be sent to Pat Masterson.  
Pat Masterson's e-mail address: Pat-Masterson@tampabay.rr.com  
Ed Gellender's e-mail address: Edward.Gellender@ngc.com or wb2eav@yahoo.com

## EDITORIAL

Since there was no space left on Page 4, let me tell you here that the solution to November's cryptogram is : HE IS ALWAYS RIGHT WHO SUSPECTS THAT HE MAKES MISTAKES.

–SPANISH PROVERB--

That is what is known as a logical paradox because if he is always right he can't make mistakes but if he isn't always right he might. If he is only suspicious, he might be paranoid instead of paradoxical. In many ways everything is a paradox for those skeptics who dare to think that anything that "is" might not be "as is" or might be sold "as is" because it really is not new but if you buy it you can't get a refund because "is" "is not necessarily anything that you got that "is" ...but is something that you bought hoping that it is "as was". ....or maybe not working as it was originally expected when it was as new as it was suspected as being. . To this day Americans can't understand why Bill Clinton was fuzzy about the definition of "is". What if SHE IS always right? I won't touch such a subject or approach it with circular logic....because in Spanish there might be a gender different in the "to be" verbs of ser and estar, while "is" is never altered by gender in English. 73, w2ilp (I Like Paradoxes)...

They disprove themselves in every regeneration.

## GARC VE EXAMS

We are continuing to proctor exams for all classes of ham licenses on the second Tuesday of each month, starting at 5:00 PM.

The present exams are:-

*The Element 1 CW exam is no longer required.*

Element 2: Technician

Element 3: General

Element 4: Amateur Extra Class

Please Note:- **THE EXTRA CLASS Q & A WAS CHANGED AS OF JULY 1, 2008.**

The fee for 2008 is \$14.00 for all exams taken in one sitting.

Applicants for upgrades should bring their present license and a photocopy of it and know their FRN number.

New, first time applicants should be aware that their Social Security number will be required on their application form, unless they register with the FCC for an FRN.

All applicants should bring picture ID such as driver's licenses.

Until further notice exams will be given at:-  
Briarcliffe College  
1055 Stewart Avenue  
Room: Long Beach #5  
Bethpage, NY  
Briarcliffe, Bethpage is located in a building that was formerly part of the Grumman complex.

All applicants should contact W2ILP to register, so as to confirm location. If no applicants apply, the exam session will be cancelled.

For any information e-mail w2ilp@optonline.net or phone- (631) 499-2214

Study material is available at the web sites of the ARRL  
<http://www.arrl.org>  
or W5YI  
<http://www.w5yi.org>  
All VECs use the same Q & A pools.

Since the beginning of the VE program the GARC has provided opportunities to take the ham exams monthly, during all 12 months of every year.

Bob Wexelbaum, W2ILP and the GARC VE team.

## GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB OFFICERS FOR 2008

President	Ed Gellender	WA2EAV	X02-14	516-575-0013
Vice President	Gordon Sammis	KB2UB	Retiree	631-666-7463
Secretary	Karen Cefalo	KC2OPX		631-754-0974
Treasurer	Ed Gellender	WB2EAV	X02-14	516-575-0013
2Yr Board Member	Zack Zilavy	WB2PUE	Retiree	631-667-4628
2Yr Board Member	Dave Ledo	AB2EF		
2Yr Board Member	Bob Christen	W2FPF		
1 Yr Board Member	Bob Wexelbaum	W2ILP	Retiree	631-499-2214
1 Yr Board Member	Jack Cottrell	WA2PYK	Retiree	516-249-0979
Trustee WA2LQO	Ray Schubnel	W2DKM	Retiree	

## STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Contact VE:	Bob Wexelbaum	W2ILP	Retiree	631-499-2214
Webmaster	Pat Masterson	KE2LJ	Retiree	813-938-4614

**GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**  
**Sixty Four Years 1944 -2008**  
**P.O. Box 0644**  
**Bethpage, NY 11714-0644**

**FIRST CLASS**

**DO NOT DELAY**

### **HRU 2009**

I missed the November HRU planning meeting because I was ill, I plan to attend the December HRU planning meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>. HRU 2009 is especially important because it is the tenth HRU and marks a decade of ham fellowship, service and knowledge, without commercial sales. HRUs are not flea markets. You can learn more about HRU 2009, and previous HRUs by going to the website at <http://www.hamradiouniversity.org/> The entry fee is only a suggested donation of \$2.00. This is the only NYC-LI ARRL Convention to be scheduled for our area in 2009, so be sure to attend it on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The keynote speaker will be Kay Craigie, First Vice President of the ARRL.

### **GARC 2009 DUES ARE DUE**

The GARC dues for 2009 will be the same as they were in 2008. That is \$20.00 for one year or \$25.00 for family membership, or \$10.00 for out of town memberships. This club newsletter is mailed to all who pay membership dues, unless they either request having it e-mailed, or cancel it because they read the newsletters via the GARC web site. Dues may be paid at the December Holiday Party or the January GARC Meeting, or mailed to Grumman Amateur Radio Club, P.O. Box 0644, Bethpage, NY, 11714-0644. Checks and mailing envelopes can be made out to Grumman Amateur Radio Club, GARC, or anything in-between.

### **GARC HOLIDAY PARTY**

The Holiday party that was held at Bertucci's last year was a success. We want to do it again, so it will be as good or better this year. We need the participation of more members in order to again get a private room for the event. Read the presidents note in this newsletter, and contact him ASAP if you are planning to attend. The holiday party will be held in any case, but we would probably enjoy it more if more of our members would attend. Directions for getting there or any further information about the party can be had from Ed. His e-mail address and phone number are listed in his message in this newsletter. The cost per person (including tax and tip) will be just under \$30 for a full meal including dessert.