

CQ de WA2LQO

Seventy Three Years: 1944 -2017

The official independent voice of the Grumman Amateur Radio Club.

DECEMBER 2017 VOLUME 90 NUMBER 12

**HOLIDAY PARTY: WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 20, 5:30PM
KWONG MING CHINESE – 3342 Jerusalem Ave Wantagh**

PRESIDENT'S NOTE by ED GELLENDER, WB2EAV

On Wednesday December 20, in lieu of our usual club meeting, we are holding our annual Holiday dinner party at Kwong Ming Chinese restaurant in Wantagh. We have eaten there a number of times in recent years, and everyone has always been very pleased with the experience. As usual, we will gather at 5:30 PM, and will be seated at 6:00 for dinner. Be sure to bring your appetite; you will certainly need it.

Directions to Kwong Ming: 3342 Wantagh Avenue Wantagh, NY

- 1. Southern State to exit 28 South - Wantagh Avenue. Go ½ mile to Jerusalem Ave. (NY105) and turn right; Kwong Ming is immediately on left OR
- 2. NY135 to exit 3 Jerusalem Ave (NY105). Take service road to Jerusalem Ave, and go west ½ mile to restaurant just past Wantagh Avenue on left.

Every December issue, I include my obligatory shameless plug for Ham Radio University, and this year is no exception. It is a terrific opportunity to attend seminars on ham radio and to catch up with old friends. The admission price is ridiculously low at \$5 for a full day immersion. The keynote speaker is long-time friend of the club ARRL Hudson Division Director Mike Lisenco N2YBB, and another old friend, NLI section manager Jim Mezey W2KFV, is presenting an NLI - ARRL forum and an EmCom seminar, .

This year there are some changes. It is now on a Saturday, January 6, 2018 from 9AM until 3PM, at a new location – Hillwood Recital Hall at CW Post University in Old Brookville; right near the Tilles Center, where many of us have attended concerts and the like.

Directions are to take NY107 north from LIE exit 41-N. Go 3 1/2 miles to Northern Blvd (NY25A) and turn left. Make a left at the “LIU POST” main entrance (second traffic light) and follow signs to the Tilles Center. Go past the Tilles Center and follow the access road until it turns left and goes along the back of the buildings. You will see

Hillwood Commons on the left, next to the radio tower for WCWP. Park and enter Hillwood Commons just to the right of the tower.

The website hamradiouniversity.com has everything you need to know.

Occasionally, Ed Whitman K2MFY has put articles in the club newsletter. Upon seeing that we really need some content, he has stepped up to provide material. This month we have a favorite article he published in Popular Electronics magazine in 1998, heralding the return of the peak of the sunspot cycle with a cute story of his early days as a novice. While I think you will enjoy the story, I regret to report that sunspots are not currently anywhere near that enviable level. Oh well.

I have been a member of LIMARC for 43 years now (well before I ever even heard of GARC), and once or twice a year they hold a hamfest at Levittown Hall on the Levittown / Hicksville border. These events are invariably scheduled to conflict with prior commitments I have, but last month someone messed up their near-perfect record and scheduled a hamfest when I could actually make it.

I hadn't been to one in a while, but I noticed that not much had changed. Actually, I think a lot of the antiquated gear for sale may have literally been the same stuff I saw for sale the last time I was there. I just love looking at that old vacuum tube gear dating back to the 50's (maybe even the 30's?), but I really cannot see anyone but a truly obsessive collector actually wanting to own it. Of course, there were outfits selling all kinds of components, old and new. I saw loads of stuff I felt I might possibly need one of these days, but I couldn't put my finger on exactly why I might be needing it, so in the end I didn't actually buy anything at all. What I mostly did, though, was catch up with a lot of old friends, which made for a delightful experience for that reason alone.

Ed WB2EAV

Back in May 1998, GARC member Ed Whitman K2MFY was the Managing Editor of Popular Electronics Magazine and wrote an editorial inspired by the then-improving sunspot cycle. Here it is, with a recent postscript.

They're Baaaack!

By Ed Whitman K2MFY

What's back? *Terminator II*? The ghosts from *Poltergeist*? No ... it's the sunspots! That's right, after being relatively dormant for about five years, old Sol is finally starting to come back to life. Funny, when DXers get together amongst themselves they talk about rare countries, DXpeditions, band openings, and of course, the sunspots. Some old-timers recall past sunspot cycles with such reverence, it almost sounds like war veterans recalling their fiercest campaigns. Let me tell you about my "campaign."

I was fortunate to have gotten started in ham radio at the onset of one of the highest sunspot cycles in recent times (1955, Cycle 19). My friend Mike and I had just got our Novice licenses, and we hung out mainly on the 80 and 40 meter CW bands. We had an ongoing competition on who could work the furthest DX from Brooklyn, NY. We were both on a somewhat even playing field: Mike with his Heathkit AT-1 putting about 40 watts into a 100-foot end-fed antenna on top of a two-story home, and my *Johnson Viking Adventurer* pushing about the same power up to a 80 meter dipole on the roof of a six-story apartment house. The way my antenna wandered all over the roof to avoid TV antennas made predicting the radiation pattern impossible, but it did get out, and appeared to favor the east-west direction.

Mike and I had not yet worked anyone west of the Mississippi when we started tracking our DX on his wall map by sticking colored pins for our furthest contacts. When Mike called me one day to say he had just worked a station in St. Louis, MO. I was devastated - I couldn't get past Chicago. One afternoon after school, I was experimenting with my rig and noticed that I could load up on the relatively new 15 meter Novice band (I specifically remember 21.150 kHz; Novices were restricted to CW operation with crystals then). I tuned around for a while, sent a slow CQ, and listened - nothing but receiver noise. Over the next few afternoons I worked a few stations, but all were more local contacts.

The following weekend, as usual, I called CQ and listened patiently. Out of the noise, I heard a slow, methodical Morse code reply, repeated about a dozen times: OE1FT. I was on the verge of panic. I had never heard a station that did not start with a K or W. I took a moment to compose myself and acknowledged his call. We exchanged some

information, and then he faded away. I looked at my station logbook and saw I copied the call OE1FT, name Franz, QTH Vienna - in AUSTRIA!

I ran over to Mike's house, and when I told him I just worked Vienna, he replied, "Sure Vienna, Virginia!" He simply didn't believe me and asked "Well, where's his QSL card?" I ran to the library, looked up OE1FT's address in the call book and mailed out one of my QSL cards ... and waited.

Over the next few weeks I worked FA8 (Algeria), ON4 (Belgium), PA0 (Netherlands), G3 (England), and EA1 (Spain). Mike's walls of disbelief were gradually eroding. Then, the *coup de grace* occurred when OE1FT's QSL card arrived. My pin was off the map! As the other DX QSLs arrived, our DX competition was over, and I had won. I didn't realize until later how important sunspots are to amateur radio, and how lucky I was to get on a great DX band just as the solar flux was on a major upswing. By the way, Mike (who now lives in California) and I still keep in contact on the air. He never got into DX, but works 2 meters.

POSTSCRIPT: Some years ago, like a ghost whisper from the past, I heard OE1FT's call sign jump out in the midst of some heavy interference on the crowded ham bands, although my call to him was drowned out in the cacophony. I looked him up again in the foreign callbook and dropped him a note about our 1955 QSO - even including a copy of his ancient QSL. Several weeks later I received a reply from Franz. Although getting on in years, he was still active in ham radio. He mentioned his early radio training was with the Austrian defense forces towards the end of World War II. He chuckled, recalling that he too felt the same way as I did on our first DX contact back in 1955, with his own first DX contact with New Zealand in 1950.

Unfortunately, I have since read that Franz has become a silent key and that the ham radio part of his estate, including his QSL cards, were picked up by a local Austrian radio club. I assume my card is in there.

..... **K2MFY**

WB2EAV COMMENT: K2MFY discovered at an early age just how dependable, yet unremarkable, 80 meters always is, just like an old plow-horse ... and how 15 meters can be as skittish as a thoroughbred when it is open, alternately thrilling and disappointing. I suspect Mike was just hangin' in there on good ol' reliable eighty. If this inspires you to give 15CW a try, right now is not a particularly good time in our current sunspot cycle to try it. Sorry. Then again, 20 has been pretty good for me lately in the daylight, and 40 has been there for me at night. Give 'em a shot - Ed

GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

TREASURER'S REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV

Ed reports finances continue to be in good shape.

REPEATER REPORT – Gordon, KB2UB

Gordon reports 146.745 Repeater is intermittent.

NET REPORT – Karen, W2ABK

Thursday night net at 8:15 PM on 146.745 MHz had 0 check ins.

Thursday night net at 8:30 PM on 145.330 MHz had 3 check ins

VE REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV

Ed reports one candidate for technician who passed. VEs: WB2EAV, WB2QGZ, KC2YRJ, KD2EXM

GARC NETS: Net Controller Karen W2ABK **40 Meters: 7.289 MHz at 7:30 AM EST Sundays**

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.

ARES/RACES NETS: Mondays.

PROGRAM

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. The membership roster has not been updated to delete Silent Keys and to enter new e-mail addresses for remaining members and friends. Please inform Pat Masterson if you need to delete, update or edit your roster information.

MEETINGS

Board and General Meetings are now combined. Unless otherwise notified they start at 5:30 PM on the third Wednesday of the month, at Ellsworth Allen Town Park in Farmingdale.

GARC Officers

President: Ed Gellender, WB2EAV 516-507-8969	wb2eav@yahoo.com
Vice President: Gordon Sammis, KB2UB Retiree 631-666-7463	sammigo@verizon.net
Secretary: Karen Cefalo, W2ABK 631-754-0974	w2abk@aol.com
Treasurer: Ed Gellender, WB2EAV (see above)	
WA2LQO Trustee: Ray Schubnel, W2DKM Retiree	schubnel@optonline.net
Board Member: Jack Cottrell, WA2PYK Retiree 516-249-0979	jjcottrell2@verizon.net
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Board Member: Jack Hayne, WB2BED	wb2bed@arrl.net
Board Member: George Sullivan, WB2IKT	

Newsletter CQ de WA2LQO is published monthly by the GARC for its members and friends.

GARC WEBMASTER Pat Masterson, KE2LJ Retiree 813-938-4614 Pat-Masterson@tampabay.rr.com

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, BUT sessions may be cancelled if no applicants make appointments. The fee is \$14. All applicants must pre-register with Ed Gellender wb2eav@yahoo.com. All new applicants should be aware that they must write their Social Security number on the application form if they have not gotten an FRN number. Applicants for an upgrade must leave with the examiner a copy of their current license. All applicants must show a photo ID such as a driver's license. Study material may be obtained from ARRL-VEC at <http://www.arrl.org>, or W5YI-VEC at <http://www.W5YI.org>. All VECs use and update the same Q&A pools.

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