

# CQ de WA2LQO

Sixty Nine Years: 1944 -2013

*The official voice of the Grumman Amateur Radio Club*

**February 2013 VOLUME 86 NUMBER 2**

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## **How I Became a Ham** (continued from January 2013)

**By Bob Wexelbaum, W2ILP**

*Synopsis: When I ended this saga last month, my PS 77 Bronx classmate Stanley Milgram and I had entered the apartment of Murray Halfon, W2NSH. As the story continues, we are about to visit the first operating amateur radio station that we had ever seen.*

Stan and I entered Murray's small two room apartment. The first thing Murray did was to turn on a single fluorescent light tube on his operating desk. The next thing he did was to disconnect his refrigerator. Then he turned on his ham equipment, which required a warm up time for the mercury vapor rectifiers to conduct, the VFOs and LOs to stabilize, etc. The room we were in served as both Murray's living room and his kitchen. Murray explained that his entire apartment ran on a single 15 ampere fuse, which was in a box in the building cellar. He didn't want to go down to the cellar to replace a blown fuse. His amplitude modulated transmitter ran a full KW plate input (at that time the legal limit) so he had to limit the power line current draw. His receiver was a Hammerlund Super Pro with a Lafayette 10 Meter converter ahead of it. There was also an antenna rotator control unit on his desk, which looked home-made. While waiting for his station to warm up, Murray explained that his transmitter, in a standard 19 inch enclosed relay rack almost as big as his refrigerator, and his antenna rotating system, were all built by Louis Pascal, W2LTQ. His antenna was built by Johnny, the superintendent of the building across the street. If we wanted to learn anything technical about ham radio we would have to see W2LTQ, who was a genius and a Class A ham. If we wanted to practice Morse we would need Johnny, who was not yet licensed. (I found out later that Johnny's real name was Kalman Katonah.) Murray promised to call both 'LTQ and Johnny to let them know when to expect visitors. He said that we would have to visit after supper, because they would be busy working during the day. Finally Murray sat down in the chair by his operating desk, while Stan and I sat on folding chairs. Murray's appearance changed as the small fluorescent light lit his face from a low angle. The little man morphed into a powerful wizard when he took hold of his D-104 microphone. Murray's shadow, as projected on the wall, was larger than life. He was no longer a little man. He was W2NSH! He tuned his receiver and we heard a ham with a Spanish accent repeatedly calling, "CQ Ten Meter Phone. This is TI5CVA..." Murray tuned his transmitter VFO to the frequency. He rotated his antenna to receive the strongest signal and carefully made other adjustments. Murray pressed his microphone PTT switch and replied in a deep voice that differed from the meek whispering that he used when we first met him; "TI5CVA this is W2NSH..." He reported that the signal he was receiving from Costa Rica was "5-9" and "We would like to see what a QSL card from Costa Rica looks like....so please QSL." I realized that "we" did not include Stan and I, but Murray and his transmitter! For Murray his transmitter had a soul in the same way some proudly refer to their boats as "she." The band conditions were good and the QSO lasted long enough for Murray to not only inform the Costa Rican ham (whose handle was Carlos) about the weather in New York, but about the New York subway and specifically about the elevated trains which were near enough on Westchester Avenue to be heard over ham radio in Central America. The Costa Rican was amazed to learn that the trains had metal wheels. He said that they sounded very noisy, and asked why they didn't use rubber tires. He told Murray that TI5CVA was actually a Vocational College station. The QSO ended after Murray explained that his address was OK in the call-book and signed 73. While this was happening Stan nudged me to look on the wall behind us. There between the dim light and dusky shadows we

saw a picture of our 5<sup>th</sup> grade honors class! (Commercial Photographers took group pictures of most public school classes, and they were usually bought by the kid's parents.) Stan and I were in that picture but we said nothing about it to Murray. We didn't know if he realized that we were in the picture. Asking about why he had the picture might be too personal. After leaving the apartment, Stan and I talked about the wonderful ham set up and how easy it seemed to work DX on 10 Meters. (Propagation conditions were excellent in those days.) Most of all we mused about the ironic coincidence of our class picture. Did W2NSH have a son or daughter who was in our P.S. 77 class? Was he separated or divorced from the mother of a kid in that picture? Was he divorced because he gave ham radio more love and attention than he gave his wife and kid? This was all speculation. Perhaps a kid in the picture was his niece or nephew, not his son or daughter. We never found out who the related boy or girl was...and never will.

We continued to discuss proposed visits to W2LTQ and Johnny. Stan said, "You're on your own Wex." He wanted no part in meeting anyone to help him prepare for a ham license exam. He wasn't interested in becoming a ham himself, although he was somewhat interested in seeing if I could. We knew that it might be possible, as there was no age limit and no cost; The license was free to anyone who could pass the exams. Stan encouraged me to go for it. Other youngsters had made it...so why not Stan's pal Wexy? Stan's and 'NSH's Boynton Ave. apartments were two subway stations away from my own apartment on Stratford Avenue, so it took me 20 minutes to run home. (In those days we reckoned short distances by sewer cover increments and longer distances by subway stations....Please remember that I was twelve years old). I hadn't told my mother I would be late and there was no telephone to keep her informed, so when I got home at almost 8 PM she was quite worried about me. She warned me to never go visit strangers again, even if they were hams. I took Stan's advice to pursue the ham license, and ignored my mother's warnings, as you will learn in the continuation of this story. (To be continued.)

**PRESIDENT'S NOTE by ED GELLENDER, WB2EAV**  
*[Did you send in your 2013 dues? See mailing address below.]*

People say "It's the end of an era" too often. However, we in the Grumman Amateur Radio Club are distinctive in now having simultaneously reached the end of two eras.

The first era we are seeing the end of is the tenure of Bob Wexelbaum, W2ILP as the capable team leader of the club's Volunteer Licensing (VE) Program for the last twenty years. Bob has been finding it too difficult to get to the exam sessions and has decided to step down. We owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for his dedication and hard work over the years. He will continue as newsletter editor, where he does another thankless job (umm, thanks - Editor).

Meanwhile we plan to continue VE sessions under my leadership. At the moment I am working with W5YI-VEC headquarters to get everything in place. I was hoping to be up and running in time for any February applicants, but the materials they are sending me have not yet arrived, so it may not happen until March. On the other hand I have no applicants yet, so it may work out OK.

Under Bob's leadership we also ran commercial exams through National Radio Examiners, a branch of the W5YI Group. I have discussed this with Bob and the W5YI folks, and it looks like for the time being we will not be continuing with the commercial exams. First, switching over is harder than for the amateur exams, and second, we get very few applicants. At this time we are not doing commercial exams, but will re-evaluate once the amateur exam program settles down.

The other era that is ending is our Post Office Box. Who knows how many hams have memorized that address over the decades? I cannot be sure, but I think it dates back to the founding of the club in 1944. The price the post office has been charging for the privilege has been skyrocketing in recent years and is now \$120 per year. That works out to several dollars per letter (...and you thought stamps cost too much?). Effective immediately the club mailing address is 215 Birchwood Park Drive, Jericho, NY 11753. (Forget the old PO Box number. Now, where is that memory eraser from the "MenInBlack" movie, now that I need it?)  
-Ed, WB2EAV

**GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB  
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 1/17/2013  
By Karen, W2ABK**

The meeting was called to order by Gordon at 5:32 PM.

**TREASURER'S REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV**

Finances continue to be in good shape.

**REPEATER REPORT – Gordon, KB2UB**

146.745 is noisy.

**NET REPORT – Karen, W2ABK**

Thursday night net at 8:15 PM on 146.745 MHz was choppy and hardly readable.

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

Sunday morning net at 7:30 AM on 7.289 MHz had 3 check-ins but was not very readable.

**VE REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV**

No applicants applied therefore the January VE Session was cancelled.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Our 2013 dues are due. Checks should be made out to “Grumman ARC” and mailed to the club address at the bottom of page 2 or the top of page 6.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Jack has reserved Marjorie Post Park for Field Day 2013. Ed brought in 2013 insurance forms for us to sign.

**PROGRAM**

Jack brought in a Heathkit radio for troubleshooting. We discussed generators for Field Day and building radios.

**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

You must see this video! It is a surveillance video camera with 1.8 Gigapixel resolution that was designed by engineers at BAE Systems. It is called the ARGUS-IS monitor system. (Certainly not to be confused with the popular ARGUS C3 camera of yesteryear.). The ARGUS-IS can not only show moving cars but it can show moving people in detail!

From an aircraft platform at 17,500 feet altitude, the ARGUS-IS can monitor a 15 square mile land area and zoom in to recognize objects as small as 6 inches. The camera can store a gigantic amount of data. I need not try to explain it in detail here because the video does a pretty good job of all that is cleared for public information. I will point out that the camera is made of a mosaic of many tiny camera chips, like those in modern cell phones. Hmm...Many eye cells...So that is how a horse fly can often avoid being swatted! Some of the design details remain classified as is the present use (or non use) for military purposes.

The web address is shown below. You may get a commercial advertisement at first but it can be skipped. Be sure to turn on your audio because you will want to hear what the engineer has to say.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGxNyaXfJsA&feature=youtu.be>

This video was brought to my attention by Leroy, WA4OTD, who posted the link on QRZ –Ragchew.

### PUZZLE

*This month I will again ask a question from the Amateur Extra Class Exam:-*

Which 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

*Last month I asked this question from the Amateur Extra Class Exam.*

What is a depletion mode FET?

- A. An FET that exhibits a current flow between source and drain when no gate voltage is applied.
- B. An FET that has no current flow between source and drain when no gate voltage is applied.
- C. An FET without a channel so no current flows with zero gate voltage,
- D. An FET without a channel so maximum gate current flows.

The correct answer is A.

**GARC 2013 Officers**

President: Ed Gellender, WB2EAV M/S:X08-14 516-575-0013 edward.gellender@ngc.com  
or wb2eav@yahoo.com

Vice President: Gordon Sammis, KB2UB Retiree 631-666-7463

Secretary: Karen Cafalo, W2ABK 631-754-0974

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**

CQ de WA2LQO is published monthly by the Grumman Amateur Radio Club for its members and friends.

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**

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. The exams are given at Briarcliffe College, 1055 Stewart Avenue, Bethpage, NY in room: Long Beach #5. Ham Exams are: Element 2 – Technician, Element 3 - General, Element 4 – Amateur Extra Class. All applicants must pre-register by contacting Ed Gellender WB2EAV. Time and location of exams are subject to change. If there are no applicants VE sessions will be cancelled. 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, plus 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 am continuing the story of how I became a ham this month. Several members contacted me and said that they liked what I wrote, and I have not received any negative complaints so far. If the entire story is well accepted I may try to submit it to the ARRL or QCWA for publication. I have plans for more stories that may interest you that I hope to be writing about in 2013 newsletters. Feel free to comment. Stay tuned. –w2ilp

Grumman Amateur Radio Club  
215 Birchwood Park Drive  
Jericho, NY 11753

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**HRU 2013**

I managed to visit HRU 2013 at Bethpage College on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013, accompanied by my son Mark (who is not a ham). I was there for only a short time since my main reason to get there was to give Ed WB2EAV my black box of Contact VE paperwork required to work with W5YI-VEC, so that the club can continue to offer VE Sessions. While at HRU 2013, I chatted a while with George, WB2IKT and I got a big hello from Tom Carruba, KA2D, the chairman of the HRU 2013 committee. I managed to get a seat (I can't stand for very long now) at the keynote speech. The keynote speaker, Bill Cross W3TN of the FCC Mobility Division, praised members of the audience for all the good work that they had done in emergency preparation and operation, and in getting more hams licensed. He emphasized that there are now more than 700,000 licensed hams in the USA although no one knows how many are actually active. He reminded us of the importance of the Basis and Purpose of Amateur Radio, as spelled out in Part 97: Emergency operation, Advancing the state of communications technology, and International good will. He also reminded us that although the FCC will protect the rights of licensed hams to set up and operate amateur stations and antennas, the FCC can't override local private community or town rules that may ban ham antennas and transmitters. He also said that the frequency allocations for repeaters can't be assigned by the FCC, so don't call on him to override the local committees that presently control such allocations; It is not his job. He said that there is now an economic mess in Washington DC that may make it difficult to change the status quo much in the near future (he doesn't even know if his position will continue to be funded). Meanwhile, because of GPS, LORAN is now being phased out, so hams are now getting a new LF allocation with the right to be the prime users of 160 Meters.

HRU 2013 was well attended this year, possibly because the weather was pretty good. There seemed to be more hams from out of the NYC-LI area this year, possibly because it was listed as an official ARRL convention. I left after the keynote speech. -w2ilp Page 6