

CQ de WA2LQO

Seventy Four Years: 1944 -2018

The official independent voice of the Grumman Amateur Radio Club.

FEBRUARY 2018 VOLUME 91 NUMBER 2

NEW MEETING DATE AND PLACE

**MEETINGS NOW ARE ON THE FOURTH WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH:
5:30 PM FEB 21 AT HAYPATH ROAD PARK IN OLD BETHPAGE**

For the past few months, Ed K2MFY has provided us with some excellent material for this newsletter. This month he has provided something he wrote a few years ago to exorcise some old demons. It relates to a very trying Valentine's Day many years ago, where his marriage came under threat, and ultimately came out stronger, peripherally involving ham radio. While a very insightful story, I feel that as written it is too personal for a radio club journal, and have even taken some liberties with a few details (making stuff up?), to share what makes the story so moving. - Ed WB2EAV

Valentine's Day Memories - The Assault on My boat anchor

By Ed Whitman K2MFY

Every February 14, most couples celebrate Valentine's day. To me it is a day to really appreciate the person you love, and to occupy time with them; no fancy presents; just spending quality time with your special person. I think back to a Valentines day almost fifty years ago, shortly after my wife Linda and I moved into our house in Plainview with our new 18 month old daughter, Eileen. That day became a most unconventional Valentines Day.

At some time during the course of the morning an epic quarrel developed. I don't even remember what even started this monumental argument; I only recall all the actions and ensuing reactions that developed between Linda and me. The buildup to the battle was slow..."I said"... "She said"... "I said"... "She said"...and so on. It culminated in Linda proclaiming, "I am taking Eileen over to my mother's house in Brooklyn." This was chilling; after almost five years I felt our marriage was now in trouble and I had to do something right now.

As Linda started to run around the house packing up Eileen's diaper bag, some clothes, and other creature comforts, I realized I had to stop her departure. I ran into the garage where our 1961 Ford Falcon was parked, and lifted the hood. With a wrench from my tool box, I removed the positive battery cable, laid the loose cable down on the engine, and then shut the car's hood. I exited the garage, and went down to the basement to hide by my ham radio desk while I waited for the inevitable fireworks when Linda tried to start the car.

Several minutes later I heard Linda open the garage door and entered the car. Silence, then a scream: "Eddie, come up here! The car is not working!" I gradually meandered up to the garage and saw Linda standing outside the garage in front of the immovable car, with the diaper bag flung over her shoulder and Eileen nestled in her arms. She repeated her conclusion: "The car is not working...Why doesn't it start?" I slid into the driver's seat and turned the ignition key. Nothing. I innocently concluded that "Something must be wrong with the battery." With that reply she shouted, "What did you do to the car? It was working fine earlier this morning." Rather than continue this circular argument I spun around and shouted that I was going to the basement because she was hysterical. As I stormed out from the garage I heard Eileen starting to cry, and I knew that, for the moment, Linda was not going anywhere, as it was time for Eileen's afternoon nap.

In the secluded stillness of the basement I sat for a few minutes and waited patiently for whatever was to happen next. I turned on the power switch to my ham radio transmitter and then the receiver. Just as I finished tuning up the transmitter and put on my headphones, I heard the thumping of Linda's feet coming down the basement steps. As I looked up she was standing over me with glaring eyes, and screamed, "What did you do to the car?" I calmly replied "You know I can't hear you with my headphones on." Furiously she pulled off my headset and screamed her question into my ears. I stumbled to reply, and finally shouted back that I disconnected something in the car so she couldn't leave the house. At that, she walked back towards the area in the basement where many of my tools were hanging on the pegboard. Grabbing the steel crowbar, she walked menacingly towards me. Linda was in a frenzy and for that second I was sure she was going to whack me with the crowbar. No, her sights were on my beloved ham radio equipment. As I shouted to her to back away, I watched in horror as she swung the crowbar down and smashed it onto the top of the transmitter. I quickly shut the power switch off, and wrestled the crowbar away from her, livid with rage. How dare she hit my innocent transmitter? I looked down at the brown metal frame; Fortunately the case was of solidly built, classic boat anchor construction, but there now was an obvious dent on the top. Finding out if there was any electrical damage to the internal components would have to wait until I could turn on the unit to check its performance. But now, it was time for revenge! I knew I had to destroy something dear to her.

Without thinking too clearly I ran up the steps into the living room where I noticed that Linda's mahjonn set in its beige vinyl carrying case on the dining room table. I quickly grabbed the handle of the case and leaped up the eight steps into the bedroom. Without hesitating, I slid open the bedroom window and removed the outside screen. A brisk breeze brushed passed me and cooled my sweaty face. I opened the mahjong case and peered at the carefully arranged array of rows of ivory-like mahjong tiles nestled quietly in the case. For just an instant I looked at the intricately carved Chinese characters, symbols, designs on the tiles.

I grabbed the end of the unlocked case, carefully tilted it through the open window and inverted its precious contents. As Linda entered the bedroom, I heard her scream as she saw the air filled with the falling tiles. An observer outside the house would have seen a blizzard of yellowish-white nylon tiles tumbling through the air from our second-story bedroom window down into the bushes below.

Linda lunged past me to grab the case back inside the bedroom. Her screams were ebbing, now the tears were coming. In a much quieter tone she questioned, "How could you do that to me?" she sobbed, "That was my new mahjong set that I use every week with the girls."

My breath was coming back in slow gasps and my anger was abating. My hard stubborn shell was melting. Now I tried to hold her and console her. I whimpered, "I'm sorry...but why did you try to damage my transmitter." She uttered, "I'm sorry too, but I got so mad when you broke the car." We held each other in our arms for a few minutes. Then I suggested, "Let's go outside and try to round up all your mahjong tiles before Eileen wakes up."

After checking that Eileen was sound asleep, we went out in front of the house and searched through the bushes. Over the next hour we found most of the tiles along with both tile racks. Towards evening I found the missing tiles in between some of the branches of nearby bushes. At the end of the day all 144 tiles were found, cleaned, and placed carefully back into the case. Later that evening I turned on my transmitter and peered through the vent holes in the dented case. I could see the warm glow emanating from the tubes, and after a brief QSO I knew that all was right again with the world. I thought for a moment that it was a good thing I hadn't yet replaced the ol' boat anchor with that solid state unit I'd been looking at.

All was now well between us. We spoke, we talked, and we kissed. We had a great remainder of this Valentine's day, with no more plans to go to Brooklyn.

For me, our relationship is very important. I can lose money, but never my wife. The test is, at the settlement of an argument, that there be a conversation, negotiation, or a compromise, and that both parties must smile. To this day we laugh at this incident and cannot recall whatever started the argument in the first place!

PRESIDENT'S NOTE by ED GELLENDER, WB2EAV

For some years now I have led the club Volunteer Examiner (VE) program for amateur radio licensing exams. We hold exam sessions on the second Tuesday of every month and we usually get a few candidates. With the small group, it is much lower stress than some crowded VE sessions, and we often have a good time. Occasionally we do not get anyone applying at all, and cancel the session.

Well, the January session was quite unusual. I had one person sign up for the exam, and then 48 hours out, he cancelled. I told my team to forget it. A few hours later, someone else asked if we were having a session. I quickly got the team to re-commit ... just in time for him to cancel. At that point I told the team for the last time we're done. Then about five hours before the test would have been held, I got a last minute request to take the exam. I am proud of myself for not losing it completely and being able to politely apologize for not having a session, before letting out an agonized scream. I hope we don't have to do that again; I'm not sure I can take it.

For many years I have been operating on 2 meter repeaters from my car. In the past few years I have been concerned that new regulations against operating various pieces of equipment while driving – while technically exempting ham radio – nevertheless represent a risk. The radios I have historically used require holding a microphone in front of your face, which is not comforting when a police car is alongside.

They do sell handsets for handi-talkies, but few handi-talkies have an auxiliary power jack to run them off of the car electrical system rather than the internal batteries. Then there are the issues of the low power output of HTs, and adapting a HT to a proper mobile antenna.

A number of years ago I put together a bit of a kluge which has worked well for me despite looking like some ridiculous contraption. Let me tell you about it. It is based on an Icom IC-V8 “sport” which is powered by six AA batteries. I have been using rechargeable Nickel-Metal-Hydride (NiMH) batteries with excellent results. Of course, once I have a decent on-air conversation, as soon as I get home I swap out and recharge the batteries. I would rather have a unit that can run off the car electrical system, but I am quite happy with what I have and haven’t seen anything that I like better.

Luckily, the HT has a BNC antenna connector, so I only need a common BNC-BNC coax to connect to a Mirage B-34 (35 Watt) brick amplifier. The amp has a UHF connector to accept a standard PL-259 on the coax to a mag-mount 5/8 wave antenna on the trunk. By the way, I bought a set of cloth coasters at a dollar store that I use under the magmount to minimize wear and tear on the metal trunklid. The antenna I have has a strong enough magnet that even with the layer of cloth, pulling it off the car takes a really good pull. I’m confident that antenna ain’t goin’ nowhere.

To complete the setup I use a single earphone headset with a boom mike and PTT switch. I put the single earphone over my right ear so that it isn’t obvious to anyone looking in an open driver’s window. The mike provides just the right amount of gain that I do not over-deviate when I’m on the highway with the windows open and subconsciously shouting above the road noise. Like I said, it is a real kluge, but it works great for me. All I need is more hams on the local repeaters like there used to be But that is a different subject entirely.

One last thing – MFJ makes a nice headset (MFJ-288I for Icom HTs), but I have gone through several over the years. They do not seem to be too rugged and seem to start falling apart after a year or two. A friend on the LIMARC repeater (Rich, N2EO) suggested that Heil – famous for microphones – also has such a unit. To my pleasant surprise, not only do they have one, but it is only costs a little more than the MFJ unit. At first glance they look identical, but on closer look there are sufficient minor differences that I conclude they are not actually the same unit. Right now, I periodically change back and forth to see how rugged each one turns out to be.

Ed WB2EAV

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

No applicants this month

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. Effective January 2018, unless otherwise notified, meetings start at **5:30 PM** on the **FOURTH Wednesday** of the month, at HAYPATH ROAD Town Park in OLD BETHPAGE. [This month's meeting is Wednesday February 21]

GARC Officers

President: Ed Gellender, WB2EAV 516-507-8969	wb2eav@yahoo.com
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WA2LQO Trustee: Ray Schubnel, W2DKM Retiree	schubnel@optonline.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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