

# CQ de WA2LQO

Seventy One Years: 1944 -2015

*The official independent voice of the Grumman Amateur Radio Club.*

**January 2015 VOLUME 88 NUMBER 1**

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## **Happy New Year**

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### **My Life as a Licensed Ham by Bob Wexelbaum, W2ILP**

I graduated from Monroe H.S. in June of 1951 and was free to concentrate solely on Ham Radio, during the following summer. It was on July 1951 that the first Novice Class and the first Technician Class licenses were to be issued, the old Class B license became the General Class, and the old Class A license became the Advanced Class. This was extremely fortunate because I was able to go to the FCC office on 641 Washington Street on the first business day that the new exams were to be given. First off I took the 13 wpm code test and as usual I failed it. Then I took the 5 wpm Novice code test and passed it with solid copy. This enabled me to take the simple Novice written test and thus to earn a Novice license. It also enabled me to take the General written exam to earn a Technician license. Within two weeks I received two FCC ham licenses in the mail; a Novice License with the call WN2ILP and a Technician license with the call W2ILP. Early in August 1951, after pounding CW in the new Novice 80 Meter band during the entire month of July, I built up enough confidence to finally pass the 13 wpm code test and was upgraded to General Class.

I didn't like the call-sign W2ILP when I first tore open the little envelope from the FCC. It sounded like "I'll pee" to me. Over the years I have enjoyed the flexibility of ILP because I have been able to generate many non-standard phonetics from it, that I use when blogging on QRZ. On the air I stick to "India-Lima-Papa" but on the Internet I feel free to fit ILP to any subject at hand. "I Like Peace" is my favorite. My old mentor W2DUP, the Bronx Emergency Coordinator, was affectionately called Duppy. He referred to me Illppy. Those handles were used only on the 10 meter local net. Off the air I was known by my non-ham friends and school-mates as The Wex. [Note the neuter article.] On the-air I used the handle Bob. I learned that Bob (commonly a nick-name for Robert) was, and I believe may still be, the most common ham handle in the world! There are really too many Bobs on the air but dahdididit dahdahdah dahdididit is easy to send by CW and easy for all who hear it to be recognized.

I had my NC-57 receiver but I had to get a transmitter. I saw an ad in a flyer from the original Radio Shack of Boston, Massachusetts for a Meissner Signal Shifter Model EX kit which was on sale for about \$60. It was originally more than \$100, so I bought the bargain. I learned later that the Signal Shifter was known to be a great TVI generator because of its profuse harmonic output and that may be why it was being discontinued. Jean Shepherd called his Meissner EX a "Signal Drifter" and dared not get too close to the edge of the band. However, it could also be crystal controlled to comply with novice regulations by plugging crystals into a jack on the front panel, which also solved the drift problem. It ran much less than the allowed 75 Watts with a 6V6GT oscillator and an 807 RF doubler. The power supply contained two 5Y3GT rectifiers, which could provide only 270 Volts for the 807. Plate and screen voltages of the oscillator were regulated by gas VR tubes and a 6E5 green "magic-eye" tuning tube indicated the oscillator output.. The RF output was 300 Ohms balanced Z rather than the more common 50 Ohm coax. It was suggested that I could use ten type #47 pilot bulbs in series as a dummy load to adjust for maximum RF output. They lit for full brilliance and thus I calculated: Ten 6.3 volt bulbs at 0.15 A is 9.45 Watts output. Definitely low power.

After earning a General Class license in August of 1951, I bought a Meissner NBFM reactance tube

modulator for the Signal Shifter at Lafayette Radio. This unit replaced the power supply, which was then mounted remotely using supplied cables. It contained a 6SL7GT AF amplifier and a 6SG7 modulator which connected directly to the 6V6GT VFO through holes that were already provided. With an inexpensive high impedance microphone I legally worked NBFM 'Phone on the high end of the ten meter band. My folded dipole antenna and transmission line were all made of 300 Ohm TV flat transmission line. The ends of the dipole were connected to poles on the either sides of the roof and the feeder line swung down to my apartment, which was in the corner of the building's court yard. This enabled me to work Bronx stations Al, W2ESU, Jose W2JYH, Herman, W2EPT, Murray W2EHW, Julio, W2OGX, Ruth W2OWL, Larry, W2HLU and others who were members of The Bronx Radio Club. In addition I was able to receive confirmed QSLs from New Jersey, Ohio, and Texas. My best confirmed DX at that time was Vicente, KP4HG of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico!

I have a QSL card that confirms that on August 23, 1951 I communicated with W2HJ, The City College Amateur Radio Society station which was operated at that time by Mitch, W2GQL. The CCNY station also used a Meissner Signal Shifter with NBFM, but they used it to drive an 807 buffer and a 100-TH final amplifier which put out more than 100 Watts of RF. Their antenna was an aluminum folded dipole on the roof of the CCNY main building. The receiver there was an HQ-120. I told Mitch that I would be entering CCNY in September and he said that he would be glad to welcome me into the CCNY Radio Society.

When I turned 18 on July 19<sup>th</sup>, I registered for the draft. I passed the related physical exam. I knew that since I had no reason to be exempt, I might get drafted into military service, however the NYC Draft Board was not drafting 18 year olds at that time. They were drafting men who were over 20 years old first.

I was not certain that I would enter CCNY although I had been accepted. I sent out resumes to all the radio manufacturers in NYC, but received no replies. My father was suffering from a disabled shoulder and he could not work full time driving taxi cabs. My mom was very ill. I thought that at 18 years old, I should at least be responsible for myself. I needed money to pay for my basic needs as well as my hobby. I could be self employed as a radio TV repairman or work part time or on a commission basis for an established radio TV store but that could not be depended upon for stable financial support.

I did enter CCNY in September, 1951 and I will continue my story next month.

### **PRESIDENT'S NOTE by ED GELLENDER, WB2EAV**

The Holiday party took place on Wednesday December 17<sup>th</sup>. We had a great time. However, the turnout was definitely lower than past dinners and that is forcing us to change the club policy for such events from now on. We will only arrange for events that do not require us to commit to specific numbers of attendees, as we can no longer estimate how many will show up. We now have to decide what the alternatives are.

It is now time for dues, which continue to be \$20 except \$25 for multiple members at one address, and \$10 for out-of-town retirees. Please mail dues to the address on the cover page. Do not use the old P.O. Box number because the GARC no longer uses a Post Office Box.

I attended Ham Radio University on Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup>. I have to say not only is it a tremendous resource to the Ham Radio community, but this unique benefit is literally in our own backyard at Briarcliffe College in Bethpage. I do confess that I only attended a couple of the lectures and seminars because I was too busy catching up with old friends instead. The lectures that I did attend were quite interesting. In one, WA2SUH and WA2CDL gave a very nice presentation of hidden transmitter hunting on Long Island (also known in some circles as bunny hunting or fox hunting). They belong to a group of hams that conducts exercises a few times a year and offered to give a presentation at any club meetings. Anybody interested? Another lecture featured KA2RGI presenting his well-polished presentation of antennas, where he has various setups prepared where he can just clip on various antenna elements to see the effect on the signal, such as may be shown on a dipole feeding a small light bulb as a receiver/power indicator ...and those are but the tip of the iceberg. It is a truly unique resource.

Ed, WB2EAV

**GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB  
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 12/17/2014  
Holiday Party  
By Karen, W2ABK**

The meeting was opened by Ed at 5:30 PM

**TREASURER'S REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV**

Finances continue to be in good shape.

**REPEATER REPORT – Gordon, KB2UB**

The 145.330 is in the process of being repaired. *Was working OK* the last times I checked –w2ilp-  
The 146.745 repeater has been relocated.

**NET REPORT – Karen, W2ABK**

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 0 check-ins

**VE REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV**

2 applicant applied; one for Technician exam and one for General exam. They both passed.

The new Tech then took and passed General exam.

3 VEs were present: Ed, WB2EAV, Bill, WB2QGZ and Karen, W2ABK

**PROGRAM.**

Our annual Holiday Party was at Delmonico's in Levittown. Only 7 Club members and one guest attended.

**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 a week before the General Meeting at the Bethpage Skating Rink, starting a 12:30 PM. *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

The internet link for this month is <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyWlJPNLPf8>

This will bring you to an old MGM short film about Ham Radio with an old biplane lost in a storm flying to locate a plane that had gone down in the Atlantic Ocean. Somehow the pilot finds the wreckage and radios its position using CW to hams which are ready to relay the SOS message before they too go down. I doubt that that really happened; When planes crash in oceans they are not so easy to locate, even with all of today's advanced electronic navigation systems, RADAR and GPS.

While you are on the website, be sure to look in the right hand margin for other ham radio videos. Be sure to click on the Jean Shepherd Part 1 video, which is actually a broadcast of one of Jean's WOR programs. After Part 1 is over it leads into Part 2, which I feel is the best because it emphasizes Jean's feelings of great pride when he first got his ham license and how he felt that he was smarter than his high school teachers. This parallels my own experiences that I've been writing about in these newsletters. After giving up on interesting his teachers in Ham Radio, he was finally asked to help a chemistry teacher he didn't even know to learn Morse Code and becoming a ham. He was proud to provide that kind of service.

When radio was new (before TV, cell phones, Internet, etc.), any radio reception was considered magic, and even more magical if you could hear it on a receiver that you built yourself .... even if only a simple crystal set. If you could become a ham and actually transmit messages in Morse Code, you might well be considered a magician. Those days are gone forever although it is hard to explain why. All I know is the thrill is gone. Nobody today appreciates the thrill that hams in the 1920 to 1950s got when they made their first QSOs. I liken it to the thrill of dating your first girlfriend, compared to having the same wife for many years.

I have learned that it is easily possible to work the world if you want to spend the time operating when conditions are most favorable and you want to spend the money required for the best transceivers and antenna systems...but even then, there is no magic involved and you can't even fantasize about yourself as being a magician. The best you can do is bring back the old memories about a time when people felt radio was too complicated for normal everyday people to operate. Today we have driverless cars, aircraft, drones. We have digital radios with AGC AFC ANL and digital scanning, filtering, nulling and enhancement. We have smart phones, smart word processors and automatic deposits and withdrawals. What is left for a modern wizard to do that can't be done by software?

## PUZZLE

*Last month's question was:-*

What is the limiting condition for sensitivity in a communications receiver?

- A. The noise-floor of the receiver.
- B. The power supply output ripple.
- C. The two-tone intermodulation distortion.
- D. The input impedance of the detector.

*Answer:*

Correct answer is A. The noise-floor of the receiver

*This month's question is:-*

If 480 kHz is radiated from a  $\frac{1}{4}$  wavelength antenna, what is the 7<sup>th</sup> harmonic?

- A. 3.360 MHz
- B. 840 kHz
- C. 3350 kHz
- D. 480 kHz

**GARC Officers**

President: Ed Gellender, WB2EAV 516-507-8969 wb2eav@yahoo.com

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

Secretary: Karen Cefalo, 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: Bob Wexelbaum, Retiree 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 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 the ARRL-VEC or W5YI-VEC <http://www.arrl.org> or <http://www.w5yi.org>. All VECs use the same Q & A pools.

**Editorial**

It is obvious that the GARC is unable to maintain or increase membership in the manner that other Long Island ham clubs have been able to. Many of the loyal members of other clubs began as Technician Class hams and grew up technically within the clubs. The GARC began as a recreation club, specifically for Grumman employees. A good percentage of its original members were engineers, technicians or aircraft mechanics. Some held Advanced or Extra Class licenses before joining. After joining the GARC, many who did not hold licenses were able to quickly become General Class licensees or above. The fact remains that the GARC was a Grumman club. Opening it up to all hams could never change that legacy. The Grumman- NG Retiree Club is having the same problems as the GARC on a larger scale, but unlike the Retiree Club, the GARC is unable to maintain two chapters on LI. Location is very important, especially when there are older members who won't travel far to club functions. The members of the GARC do not all live close to Bethpage. There is no longer a QCWA LI chapter and that is because too many of its functions were held in Nassau County, while most of the younger guys, who more recently became eligible (after being hams for 25 years) reside in Suffolk. The GARC remains a service club, which provides 2-meter repeaters and proctors ham exams. It also provides social connectivity for its members and like the retiree club, reminiscences of its past history in its newsletters. If we analyze these facts we might also cheer ourselves up with a unique sense of pride and good humor rather than gloom and doom. Is it too late to redefine our future? Let's hear comments.

73 de w2ilp (I Laugh Politely)

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Jericho, NY 11753

FIRST CLASS MAIL

*Do Not Delay*

**ON LOSING AN OLD FRIEND**

**Bob Wexelbaum. W2ILP**

Recently, I lost a good friend and classmate of mine. He was never a ham but I am writing about him because he did influence me in ways that related to my hobby as a ham. His name was William Steinsmith, who I first knew as Billy. When I entered fifth grade at P.S. 77 in the Bronx, I was placed in a “Talent class” where all the boys and girls were of high intelligence or showed special talents in science, art or music. The smartest boys in the class were Billy Steinsmith and Stanley Milgram, who became a world class sociologist, famous for his social experiments on obedience to authority. Billy was an egotist and a bully who wanted to establish the pecking order by proving that he could physically and mentally beat any boy in the talent class. He lived on my block on Stratford Ave which gave him opportunity to bully me as we walked to school. He wore thick eyeglasses and when he learned that I could not read to the lowest lines of an eye chart he insisted that I go for glasses, even though I barely needed them. At Christmastime, the class had a party where everyone had to pick a name from a big bag and bring a gift to the student whose name they drew. I missed the party because I was home sick with the flu, so Billy brought a gift of a good book to me at home. After that we became close friends and we always shared our ideas and concepts about anything that we had learned about the world. I still believe that Billy only brought me the book because his very ethical mother forced him to.

Billy was a health nut and a weight lifter. He never ate white sugar, white bread, or white rice and bought expensive vitamins because Carlton Fredricks advertised them on the radio. After failing engineering, law and journalism courses at different colleges because of his bad attendance, Billy found his calling, became a medical doctor, and practiced as an internist in San Francisco. Because his cause of death is still being investigated there has been no formal obituary about him to be found on the Internet.

I never expected to outlive Billy; If I knew I would outlive him without exercising, dieting, or taking vitamin pills, I would have eaten more hot dogs and fried clams and never bought a treadmill.

Bob w2ilp (I Lived Practically)

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