

CQ de WA2LQO

Seventy One Years: 1944 -2015

The official independent voice of the Grumman Amateur Radio Club.

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My Freshman Second Semester at CCNY And Ham Radio During That Time by Bob Wexelbaum W2ILP

After I was licensed in 1951, the first Novice and Technician licenses were issued. It was understood that the Novice license was a sort of learner's permit that gave you a year to work towards the General Class ticket before it expired. It was at a time when "real" hams looked down at any amateur licensee who was unable to pass the 13 wpm CW exam that I joined the CCNY Amateur Radio Society. I never met the trustee who held the call sign W2HJ. He was neither a student nor an instructor at CCNY; likely an alumni. The president of the Society was Mitch, W2GQL, who I had worked on 10 Meters before I had entered CCNY and who welcomed me in. I lost contact with Mitch when he moved to Washington, DC and changed his call sign. I learned that he became an Army officer and operated a MARS station at the Pentagon. The CCNY Society had about 40 members at the time, including two or three females studying for ham licenses, and at least 6 black members. As a General Class licensee I was given the key to station W2HJ, which was in a sort of a penthouse over the bell tower on top of the Gothic-architecture CCNY main building. I only managed to operate it a few times due to my busy schedule. Sometime during my second semester, there was a "show and tell" type of event that was held outdoors at the CCNY campus to attract new members to the various CCNY clubs and organizations. I volunteered to bring all of my own station equipment to show at the event, including my Meissner Signal Shifter, my RF power amplifier, my RF pre-selector, and my NC-57. We could not connect AC power or an antenna to actually operate the equipment, but it was decided that we would show the stuff anyway. I could not transport all of it to CCNY, so we set it up that a society member with a car would pick it up, deliver it, and return all of my most valued possessions to my home QTH. The equipment was picked up by a black member and his father in a station wagon. I was uneasy trusting all of my ham station to the care of someone I didn't even know, but not a single part was missing or damaged during the transition. This showed me that hams could trust other hams, as I have consistently found to be true over my lifetime. Another black ham who I had known before and during my time at CCNY was Herman Richards, W2EPT (sk) who left the engineering course at the same time that I did, although he remained at CCNY in the industrial arts program. CCNY had a commercial grade printing press that was used for educational purposes and he used it to print QSL cards. I lost track of Herman after he moved to California to become a shop teacher. I have forgotten the names or calls of other ham society members that I got to know well but never met again, except for Eugene Calvert, W2HTK (sk) who I met several times, years later. Gene had graduated from CCNY Engineering and was working for Bell Labs in New Jersey. At that time I was working at Emerson, developing transistorized IF amplifiers. Gene was bored with his job because for four years he had been testing the reliability of open leaf switches, and never got an opportunity to work with the kind of state-of-the-art products that I was doing.

Academically I continued failing courses. I had lost my confidence and became terrified when taking tests. It was like being able to walk a straight line but being afraid of heights and thus being afraid of walking the same straight line when the line was the edge of a high rooftop. I often remembered test questions and answers as soon as I left the test room. What hurt most is when I realized that I had submitted the wrong answers, even when I remembered the right ones too late. I had failed Physics during the first semester and I took it again in the second semester with a different recitation instructor; only to fail it again. I did get the same

Physics lecturer, Dr. Zemansky, who had co-authored the Physics text book. I remember how he demonstrated acceleration due to gravity using a strobe light on drops of falling water.

Most important were Zemansky's discussions about attempts to reach temperatures approaching absolute zero. Theoretically all electron motion would cease to exist if absolute zero could be reached and thus theoretically molecules of matter could no longer exist in their normal states. This topic is now known as Cryogenics. Practical temperature expansion and contraction consideration is extremely important to all phases of mechanical and electrical engineering designing.

I got an A+ in my English Essay class because I was able to use most of the essays and poems that I had written while in high school by fitting them to the topics suggested by the English professor. I got a B+ in Social Studies. The Social Studies professor was a southern gentleman who presented both sides of the Civil War, as well as racism and middle class economic and morality questions, as they still exist today and according to him would always exist. This subject is off topic here, but philosophically it always interested me.

I asked if there were any MARS members in the CCNY Amateur Radio Society to see if anyone would be interested in joining me in MARS nets. There weren't any, but I knew that all the hams at CCNY did not belong to the club, so I put a notice on the bulletin board asking anyone who might be interested in joining MARS to contact me. To my surprise I was contacted by my chemistry professor who was a licensed ham. He asked me to meet with him because he saw my notice, but unfortunately it was not about MARS, it was about my chemistry grades. He said that he looked up my chemistry grades and I was averaging less than 60% and there was no way that he could help me pass the course. He admitted that the Chemistry tests depended on a lot of rote memorization. You were not permitted to look at the periodic chart when taking tests but had to memorize the atomic weights of every chemical element, as well as how many free electrons each had in their outer rings. He knew that I understood why some elements were conductors, why some were semi-conductors and why some gasses were inert...but that was not enough to pass the tests. He also knew that I had memorized the purposes and pin connections for hundreds of vacuum tubes and had no memory space left in my brain for chemical valences. He offered me some good advice that led to my decision to not just change my major at CCNY but to quit entirely and get a job. It was my ham friend W2EPT who pointed me into the exact direction for my entry into full time employment. I'll say more about that next month.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE by ED GELLENDER, WB2EAV

I have recently returned from a long hiatus to the HF-bands, and I have to say that I am really enjoying working 40 and 15 Meter CW. While doing so, I have recently learned that there really is something new out there. About ten years ago a group started up calling themselves the Straight Key Century Club. Their goal is to encourage more old fashioned CW with mechanical keys (yes, bugs are included). It appears to be an extension of the long-standing ARRL Straight Key Night on New Years Eve. I learned about the Straight Key Century Club (SKCC) in an interesting way. I was tuning around and heard a nice, slow Morse "CQ WES." Not wanting to commit a faux pas I didn't reply. I was confused because contests that use such formats are all doing high speed code, but this was almost leisurely. Later I asked around on a two Meter repeater and found out that there is a straight key club that holds their own events that pointedly feature nice slow code, using the term "Week End Sprint" or WES. My old J-38 key that I have been using all my life aligns me perfectly with those goals, so I researched the group and have now joined myself. It is free and I am now SKCC member 13876. Since then I have worked a few guys who were calling "CQ SK" and sure enough they were looking for SKCC members. They seem to delight in exchanging their SKCC member numbers right after RST. If you wish to investigate further check their website: SKCCgroup.com

**GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING 4/15/2015
By Karen, W2ABK**

The meeting was opened by Gordon at 5:35 PM

TREASURER'S REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV

Finances continue to be in good shape.

REPEATER REPORT – Gordon, KB2UB

Bill N2NFI is ready to move the Hauppauge repeater & equipment into a new building soon.

NET REPORT – Karen, W2ABK

Thursday night net at 8:15 PM on 146.745 MHz had 1 check-in.

Thursday night net at 8:30 PM on 145.330 MHz had 0 check-ins.

Sunday morning net at 7:30 AM on 7.289 MHz had 0 check-ins

VE REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV

Three applicants applied: One for Technician Class and two for General Class. The Technician Class applicant failed. The two General Class applicants passed.

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

OLD BUSINESS

The equipment insurance came up for renewal.

PROGRAM

Ray brought in his US stamp collection, starting from the 1800s. He showed us how to look for the values of stamps and the stories behind them in a stamp catalog. It was a very impressive collection.

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 at Haypath Park on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 12:00 Noon *Meetings may be cancelled or relocated. Check the website.*

WEBSITE

The GARC web site can be found at <http://www.qsl.net/wa2lq> . 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 LINKS OF THE MONTH FOR *Protesters*?

Poor black people are protesting worldwide...not just in Baltimore and cities in the US. Even the Black Ethiopian Israelis are protesting in Israel. It may be about police brutality but it is also about socioeconomic unrest which is always prevalent where there is a great difference between what poor and middle class people, especially teen agers and students can afford. Those who argue that it is because governments do not provide enough money for food, rent and education subsidies are in my humble opinion only partly correct. It was pointed out that the city of Baltimore spends more on education than most cities. All the kids in Baltimore are educated about the use of computers but few can own the latest X-boxes, Sony Work Stations, iPads, iPhones, etc. that many middle class white kids have. Kids don't care if they don't get luxury food, live in deteriorating apartments or are forced to wear hand me down rags...but they do care when they realize that they can't afford the latest Internet linking devices, apps and O.S. that the middleclass white kids are now using.

PUZZLE

Last month's question was:-

What is the advantage of using a trap antenna?

- A. It has a high directivity gain
- B. It has high gain
- C. It minimizes harmonic radiation
- D. It may be useful for multiband operation

Answer: The correct answer is D.

This month's question is:-

What is a paracitic element of an antenna?

- A. An element polarized 90 degrees opposite the driven element
- B. An element dependent on the antenna structure for support.
- C. An element that receives its excitation from mutual coupling rather than from a transmission line.
- D. A transmission line that radiates radio-frequency energy.

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 jjcottrell2@verizon.net
1 Yr. Board Member: Dave Ledo, AB2EF
1 Yr. Board Member: Jack Hayne, WB2BED
1 Yr. Board Member: George Sullivan, WB2IKT

Newsletter

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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 ARRL-VEC or W5YI-VEC <http://www.arrl.org> or <http://www.w5Yi.org>. All VECs use the same Q & A pools.

Editorial

Please notice that Jack Cottrell's e-mail address has changed (see correct address above). Jack has also notified us that the August board meeting scheduled for Haypath Park. has been cancelled due to a Town of Oyster Bay Program. We are sure Jack will figure it out in plenty of time. Other meeting schedules remain unchanged.

Jack says that he enjoys reading my articles about my own successes and failures; however I am not so certain about what others may think about all of my personal bragging and complaining. I am now trying to edit my stuff with more care so that it applies more generally to ham radio than to my own ego. This is not so easy. Ham Radio is after all a hobby for egotists.

73, Bob, W2ILP (I'll Limit Politics)...and hope that politicians will limit payoffs...

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Do Not Delay

Commemorating the Sinking of the Lusitania

Those of you who have HF stations might want to get involved with the commemorating of the sinking of the Lusitania which is being run from May 1st to May 15th. There is still time to sign up for open time slots for working from your home QTHs as special event station N2L. The way it works is that you sign up for specific frequencies, modes (either CW or SSB) and specific 2 hour times when you register to plan to be on the air. This operation is not just for the LIMARC, Great South Bay or Radio Central clubs. It is for the entire NYLI section. Go to <http://gsbarc.org/N2L.htm> for further information needed to register.

Another special event that you might want to participate in is to be held on May 20th, when the Special Event Station K2CAM of the Cradle of Aviation Museum will commemorate the 88th anniversary of Charles Lindbergh's solo flight to Paris.