

CQ de WA2LQO

Seventy Three Years: 1944 -2017

The official independent voice of the Grumman Amateur Radio Club.

OCTOBER 2017 VOLUME 90 NUMBER 10

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 18, 5:30PM

ELLSWORTH ALLEN PARK IN FARMINGDALE

PRESIDENT'S NOTE by ED GELLENDER, WB2EAV

I'm sorry if last month's column upset anyone. It dates back to when I sent my President's Note column in to the editor for the September newsletter, and he refused to run the item, giving reasons I felt were not relevant. I brought the issue up before the club board of directors, prepared to resign if they felt I was wrong, and edited in the column you saw. On September 20, the board met to discuss the matter, and agreed with me. Ray W2DKM volunteered (TNX OM) to try to defuse the issue with the editor, who resigned.

Now, after that somewhat upsetting news, I am now going to expose you to the sedition and heresy that started it all. Immediately below you will find an exact word-for-word copy of what I submitted. You might want to keep a fire extinguisher handy just in case my blasphemy bursts spontaneously into satanic hellfire.

I have an old linear 13.8V 15 amp power supply that doesn't regulate, putting out about 20 volts, and I decided to see if it is repairable. I had no particular problem opening it up and quickly determined that the problem was the 14 pin DIP LM723N regulator IC was outputting the full input voltage to the large emitter-follower transistors; obviously a collector-to-emitter short on the IC's output stage. I was pleased to see that things are accessible, as opposed to the current generation of switching power supplies. (I have no particular problem with the original surface mount 0.050" pin spacing, but doing anything with the current rage in high pin count 0.020" spacing requires a million dollars worth of specialized equipment). The IC in question is a real oldie-but-goodie, dating back to the Fairchild uA723 circa 1970. Can I still get parts that old? Another pleasant surprise was just how available they still are. Apparently a number of old ICs have become ubiquitous "jellybeans," widely available at minimal cost. Interesting that they are still perfectly viable after half a century And this at a time when you can't get the latest computer parts anymore after less than a year.

In a couple of days I had two new ICs and a 14 pin DIP socket in-hand, enough to add a socket and still have a spare. Then things got kinda busy, and it has all been sitting on my workbench untouched for a month now. Maybe next time I will be able to finish this story.

Update: The new 723 went right in, and the power supply has been providing 13.8V to my Yaesu FT-891 since.

While news these days has a shelf life shorter than that of fresh oysters, as of September 29th I had not heard anything about ham radio coming to the rescue after a series of devastating natural disasters (earthquakes in Mexico and hurricanes in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico). Finally, I just heard an item on NPR radio that the ARRL is sending 50 hams to Puerto Rico to provide communications support to the Red Cross. The ARRL is providing each volunteer with the same prepackaged kit of all the HF and VHF gear they will need. (hams usually bring their own radio gear).

Ed, WB2EAV

Ray, W2DKM had an idea that we reprint an article that appeared in this publication forty years ago. It would be a good idea to discuss at the meetings what has changed ... and what has not.

–Ed, WB2EAV

In the summer of 1977, GARC member Jerry Tell WB2QHE took his 30 foot Pearson yacht "THE DXER" to Bermuda, accompanied by his friend Paul (WA2OOM) and their wives. On the way back they experienced terrible weather, and 60 miles out from Montauk they found themselves out of gas with a damaged mainsail. Jerry's wife Joan wrote this story from her notes.

FROM THE LOG OF THE DXER by Joan Tell (XYL WB2QHE)

Once we realized we were in trouble, we regretted not having a ship-to-shore radio on board, but we did have Jerry's HF transceiver, along with a direction-finding receiver (RDF) and an emergency beacon. We still had a fully charged battery on the engine. Paul got on the radio and immediately heard a British station working WB4QWM in South Carolina, who was putting in a beautiful signal. Paul broke in with "Maritime Mobile break WA2OOM" and Jim WB4QWM came back immediately. Paul described our situation, explaining that this was not quite a "Mayday," but we felt assistance was necessary. It turned out that Jim was a retired Navy man and understood the situation immediately, saying if he were in a similar situation he would do exactly what we were doing.

We told Jim how we were near Montauk, and wanted to contact the Coast Guard there. He immediately got on the telephone with the South Carolina Coast Guard, relaying their questions to us. He then advised us that the Coast Guard in South Carolina would relay our information to the Coast Guard in New York. As we later found out, for the Coast Guard in South Carolina to contact the Coast Guard in New York, the message has to go through Miami. The chain of events became unbelievable from there.

All this time, Jim remained on the air with us (this is what is so wonderful about hams) and requested that the frequency remain open due to "a maritime emergency." No one interfered, even though we knew by now hundreds of hams were monitoring the conversation. The respect that hams have for the proper use of their radios is great.

In a little while the Coast Guard called Jim back and wanted our exact location. With the bad weather, "taking a fix" was impossible, and the other gear we had (calculated Line of Position, or LOP) wasn't sufficient either. Just then a large freighter, the Tanasford, was passing nearby and we passed that information along via Jim. If they were monitoring marine channel 16, as they were supposed to do, they could provide their own location fix, which would be close enough. The New York Coast Guard called Jim back (collect, which surprised us) to say that they could not make contact with the Tanasford.

The Coast Guard then suggested we try to set up our own VHF Marine band radio (we had the rig but no antenna on board) and see if we could jury-rig some kind of antenna. They would be sending out a cutter, and if we could communicate with them we could use our RDF to get headings to relay back to them and lead them in.

Jerry and Paul tried to use a piece of coat hanger as an antenna, but unfortunately they never got it working on the marine band.

At this time we realized that all of Jim's long-distance calls to the Coast Guard, and their collect calls back to him, were running up quite an expense, and we would certainly have to reimburse him as soon as we could

Jim then said the Coast Guard was going to send out an airplane that should arrive in the area in about an hour and a half. Jim was able to talk to the pilot, USCG LT Chris Burns, Search-and-Rescue aircraft 1347. The plane had some HF gear, and relaying through Jim, we quickly found a frequency we both had. Eventually we established direct contact, and LT Burns was delighted to hear we had an emergency radio beacon that he could home in on. He was making progress when something stopped working. He estimated he would be in our area in about 6 minutes, and told us to fire a flare as soon as we saw a white airplane with a red stripe at 2000 ft altitude.

This was the longest, yet most exciting 6 minutes. Suddenly I spotted him off to the starboard, and Jerry released a flare. The plane immediately flew right over us and circled back. On the radio he told us he was going to drop a new emergency beacon, which landed just to our starboard side. We pulled it in with a boathook and tied it down as instructed. On the next pass he dropped an emergency radio to communicate with the Coast Guard ship later. It was in a large container with a parachute, and it hit the water right off our stern. We opened the canister and pulled out the radio. We had to laugh, as it looked like one of those Mattel toy gadgets advertised on children's television shows. We said on the HF radio that we had it, and got the response "I hate to sound cheap, but you must return the radio when you get to Montauk." We laughed again. His final words as he flew off were that the Coast Guard Cutter Point Heron would be arriving about 1630 hours.

It was now about 1400 hours and we spoke to Jim for the last time, thanking him profusely and getting his address. He asked us to give him a landline call when we were safe in port. He then thanked all the hams on the frequency for standing by. We also thanked them, for their cooperation was vital. The hams on that frequency are to be commended; they stood by in case we lost Jim or vice versa, so they could provide an additional relay if necessary. At that time Jim's original contact in England asked if we thought there might be anything he can do to help. We thought that was fantastic and joked among ourselves about requesting the Royal Navy.

If anyone ever says even one slightly derogatory word about hams, I will personally – verbally, and if necessary, physically – abuse them, for they know not of what they speak.

At that point Jim signed out and we turned off the radio to wait. Suddenly there was dead silence. Since 0630 we had been a beehive of activity with the radio on in the background, crackling or humming, and now we were a 30 foot boat, alone, with nothing on the horizon. We sat, each just trying to comprehend in his own way what had transpired.

We started just quietly talking about nothing really – How wonderful the hams were and what a superb job the pilot did with his drops. The boys were visibly exhausted and in minutes they fell asleep. We decided to let them sleep until we saw the Point Heron. I figured now comes the wait but it shouldn't be too long. I started cleaning up a bit and hung out some clothes.

At 1450 hours Diana and I decided to take turns on watch. At 1630 hours still no sign of the Port Heron. We realized it was not an exact time. At 1730 with no sign yet, we began to worry. At 1800 we decided to wake the boys. They were still groggy, but we needed to figure out what we were going to do. We decided to see if we could contact the cutter with the little radio the pilot dropped, but all we could hear was a siren sound which we realized was the emergency beacon, and confirmed it with the RDF. We had to leave the beacon on, as that was the cutter's primary way of homing in on us. By 1900 hours we were a pretty dejected group. It would be dark soon and we were worried that lights would run down what charge was left in the battery. We realized that no way was Jerry going to keep his promise to be back to work in the morning. Since we had never declared an emergency, the cutter might not come until morning, which we found depressing.

We played cards and boiled some soup to pass the time, which helped a little. When Jerry said the wind had calmed down and maybe he could sew the sail, we jumped at the opportunity. Of course, such a repair would never hold if the wind picked up, but we decided to do it anyway. Once Jerry and I went up top with me holding a light, it felt good to finally be doing something, despite the cold breeze up there. There is nothing as frustrating as being helpless.

We realized that if we succeeded with the sail, going too far from where we were supposed to be could initiate a serious air-sea search, and we certainly didn't want that. All of a sudden we spotted a light off our bow, unmistakably the cutter. Then, another light off our stern. "They're here" we cried, but why two?

At 2130 hours the cutter Point Wells was alongside and we were talking to the captain with the radio. We said if he could give us some gas we could try sailing with the engine as a backup into Montauk. The captain told us that they didn't have any gasoline and the wind was starting to build up again; He thought the best bet was to tow us in. As we tied their line to our bow cleat, they asked for our maximum rated hull speed, as pulling us too fast could break up the boat.

At 2200 hours we were finally underway, and very relieved.

GRUMMAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE BOARD/GENERAL MEETING 9/20/2017
By Karen, W2ABK

The meeting was called to order by Ray at 5:30 PM.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Ed, WB2EAV

Ed reports finances continue to be in good shape.

REPEATER REPORT – Gordon, KB2UB

Gordon reports 146.745 Repeaters is not working.

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 no VE session 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

Our 2017 Summer Picnic was held at the LaCasa Restaurant at Crab Meadow Beach. 14 people attended. We met at 5 PM outdoors on the patio for cocktails. We were seated inside at 6 PM. Most dinners started at the salad bar. We ordered various pasta, seafood, or veal dinners on separate checks. We finished at about 8:30 PM after some stayed to watch the beautiful sunset on the sound.

Ed Whitman and his wife Linda did not attend the Summer Picnic because they were celebrating their 55th wedding anniversary at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Puenta Cana, Dominican Republic, accompanied by their 3 daughters, son-in-law and 5 grandchildren.

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
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Board Member: George Sullivan, WB2IKT

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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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