

THE

Propagator

Garden State Amateur Radio Association



W2GSA

MARCH 2019

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Holmdel, NJ 07733



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www.gsara.club
www.w2gsa.org

Please visit the club website
and feel free to use our open
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From the President Art Olson, N2AJO



Here we are at the beginning of March already. Hopefully everyone managed to make it through the winter weather during January and

February and our focus now is looking forward to the spring arrival. With the arrival of spring, activities and events will begin to pick up through the remainder of this year.

I hope everyone who can, will be attending our member of the year luncheon as we honor one of our own, Chris Wantuck. It will be on March 2, 2019, 2pm at Zachary's Restaurant located in West Long Branch. I encourage everyone to come out and celebrate.

Progress is being made in the shack improvement and transitional phases. Howard Suffill has been working with the Red Cross to finalize our internet requirements while Phil Festa has

been installing an equipment rack with backup power for all of our fixed services. Once both of these objectives are complete, then the Wires-X server will be relocated and the remote access system will become operational. A separate flyer and operational document will be made available to the members for accessing the remote access system.

Denis Commette continues to get the plans and location finalized for Field Day. More on that will be covered at the March business meeting. I am asking everyone to get involved whether as a committee member and/or a participant in June.

Paul Newland, AD7I has completed the setup of the new ham user training program. In February, Paul sent out 96 letters to newly licensed ham operators explaining what the program is about and how GSARA could assist them to get started in this hobby. There is a sign-up sheet on our web site for those wishing to attend the

round table discussions.

Upcoming events are listed below. I am asking folks to get involved and help the club maintain its great community reputation. Also don't forget to check out the last page of the Propagator for a listing of contests and member birthdays.

- ***Member of the Year Luncheon - March***
- ***New Jersey Marathon Support - April***
- ***Family Pot Luck Picnic - May***
- ***Field Day - June***
- ***Ham Fest - September***
- ***Twin Light Bike Tour - September***
- ***Red Bank CROP Walk - October***
- ***JDRF (Juvenile Diabetes) - October***
- ***Boy Scout JOTA - October***



Lastly, I would like to hear from the membership on your thoughts and ideas. The leadership team works for you the members and together we can continue to move our hobby forward.

Respectfully, Art, N2AJ0



FROM THE EDITOR

Bob Buus, W2OD

It's funny how our memory can play tricks with us. While researching the material for the "My First QSL Card" column in this issue, I was shocked about two discoveries made when I studied my first logbook. I thought that I spent nearly a month after obtaining my license before I made my first contact. It turns out, that the log shows only a week of unsuccessful tries at radio contacts. My memory is of a very frustrating time and I guess that's why I thought it was much longer than a week.

Also, I always thought my first QSO was with K6AAN. However, the log shows a contact with a novice in Colorado (WN0QVI) before the K6AAN contact at the end of the second page of the log. I can't believe I thought I had made contact with WN0QVI and then promptly forgot about it (although by any standard it shouldn't have been counted as a first QSO.) I guess one's memory gets a bit distorted after 65+ years.

March 6 is rapidly approaching and if you haven't paid your dues for 2019 by then, you will be dropped from our membership roster and mailing list. Our Treasurer, John, KC2YWL will be happy to take your \$20 at the March 6 meeting. If you can't come to that meet-

ing, you can also mail your dues to him with check payable to GSARA at:

John Chunga, KC2YWL
109 S. Station Ave.
Avon, NJ 07717

When I first read Clinton DeSoto's "200 Meters and Down" I got the impression that radio amateurs discovered "skip" propagation on the HF bands. Then I ran across the paper by Edwin Armstrong, part of which is in the "Now You Know" column in this issue, which shows that Marconi made the discovery. I might excuse Desoto for the oversight since he obviously was promoting the best side of amateur radio (for the transatlantic tests of 1922, he failed to say

that 1AAW was the first station heard and that it was a pirate). When I carefully reread DeSoto, he did not specifically say that amateurs discovered "skip" but he didn't say they didn't. I suspect he knew the truth but failed to mention it. Maybe it's because by 1936 (when DeSoto wrote his book), Marconi was a strong supporter of Mussolini's Fascists and thus was not very popular in this country. Does anyone have any other ideas about this?

As always, I appreciate feedback or material for The Propagator. The deadline for the April issue is March 15.

73 de Bob, w2od@arrl.net

GSARA Swag

GSARA Patches

We have GSARA patches available at all meetings and they are \$3. Show your GSARA pride!

GSARA News

Keep up with GSARA news at the GSARA website:

www.gsara.club
www.w2gsa.org

Blue Swan Lunches

A number of local radio amateurs meet each Friday at the Blue Swan Diner on Highway 35 south in Ocean Township at noon. Anyone interested in amateur radio is welcome to join us in the back left corner of the diner.



Working on a project you want to share with the club?
Send it to k2cys@arrl.net with a description and picture and we will get it into the Propagator.

Share the joy! Share the pride!

The GSARA Propagator is designed in InDesign CC 2019

- Editor: Bob Buus, W2OD
- Layout: Cy Stanway, K2CYS
- Photos: Harry Zuzuro, KD2EJW

You are invited to submit articles and ideas



Chris Wantuck, W2NQB GSARA 2018 Member of the Year

I come from a family of four Ham radio operators. I would like to begin with a man I never met, my late father's older brother, my uncle Joe. He was first licensed as W2GRC as best I can determine in 1934 at age 14. In the Summer of 1936, Joe was a participant in a Yonkers church sponsored day boat trip up the Hudson river to a resort facility. Uncle Joe got off the boat, proceeded directly to the swimming pool, dove in and hit his head on the bottom of the pool. Joe died later that afternoon.

This would explain how my father, Adam, acquired his older brother's radio gear. Adam was licensed as W2NQB in about 1938. During the war years, he wrote often to his parents in Yonkers and those letters survived many decades bundled with aging rubber bands. Unfortunately they were written in Polish, my Grandparents native language, and I cannot read any of them. Glancing over many of them, three letters jump off the pages; QST. One letter's translation confirmed that he was saying that he received his monthly copy of QST. It wasn't certain whether Adam's parents were forwarding the copies or if the ARRL did direct mailing. That one translated letter revealed some other details. You would think that with his communications experience, he would have been assigned to operate radios. For whatever reason, he got the task to maintain and refuel the unit's electric generator. The return addresses of these letters were from the training posts, camps and stations associated with being an Infantryman. Adam seemed to have time on his hands (between training and generator duty), the envelopes were works of art, a talent unknown to his youngest son. Adam made it through the war unharmed (no doubt to the joy of his parents as the only surviving child) he attended Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY as part of the Country's GI Bill. During those four years studying engineering, he operated ham radio from the top floor of a brownstone near the campus. Adam graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering and commenced his career with companies IBM (New York) and Bendix (Teterboro, NJ).

The third family member to get his ticket is my older brother, Adam Jr., as WA4QQR, circa 1975. You'll note the region is south Florida where both of us grew up. Adam Jr. operated on some of the HF bands, but his real love was designing and installing 2 meter Yagi directional antennas and performing tower work. To this day, many of his repeaters (and antennas) are still in use in South Florida. He now resides just outside Indianapolis where he guides other Amateurs with his VHF and UHF experiences.

Now I'd like to introduce you to a man I'm very familiar with though not a family member, but might as well have been given his role. Ron Frydrychowski, (Mr. Fry was his preferred title), was an electronics technician with the US Navy, and

during his time with the Navy, earned college degrees in Administration. Mr. Fry's vision was to provide a reliable means for youth of the time to achieve a practical education in the every growing electronics industry. This vision resulted in an elaborate proposal for a vocational program to exist within a high school setting. The controversy in this was that Florida



was dead last in the US in per capita expenditure for spending for students. Even Alaska spent more money on their students' education. To his surprise, his \$100K proposal (circa 1977) for high grade teaching equipment (cabinets and components) along with Simpson multimeters and Techtronix brand instruments was approved. I'm one of 13 members of the second graduating class of that program. Sadly my father Adam Sr. lost his battle to cancer two weeks before my high school graduation and did not see first hand anything of this unique and rewarding vocational program.

In the high school setting, the vocational path, provided a good foundation for a single subject, but did little for other important academic courses such as mathematics. This proved to be the lesson learned during my four years at Pratt Institute, where I eventually earned my degree in Electrical Engineering. During this period where I majored in engineering and minored in running, as in running from college to the off-campus apartment,

since the neighborhood around the college grew in crime and unsafe conditions. I guess my survival record of only one mugging robbery was better than the average. My solace was escaping on weekends and holidays to the Smith house, a Rumson family which in reality was a retreat for me. The Smiths, a family with Christian values and interests and professions in the Arts offered many other life education benefits which for me, included appreciating single malt scotch. If you wonder how or why I offer to assist others with their projects, you can trace it back to the Smith family influence on me. After graduation, I relocated to Monmouth County and commenced my 29 year career with the US Army at Ft Monmouth holding positions in engineering, Project Manager, and finally as Chief Engineer in a special aviation oriented project office.

In the Summer of 2003, at the age of 42, I underwent a medical procedure called coronary bypass surgery, where veins are surgically grafted into the main artery for improved blood flow to the heart. This has the nickname of "double bypass." This was the "gift" bestowed upon me courtesy of my paternal lineage. During the three week convalescent period, I studied and passed the Technician Class and quickly followed by the General Class under the auspicious of the then no code test license. I still recall my first HF contact, to the light ship Bramble on Lake Michigan. I knew what a light house was, but clueless on light ships.

You'll notice I'm wearing a shirt and tie which provides me the opportunity to wear my favorite blue sport jacket and displaying my citations received during my career with Government Service. Recognition is a vital part of any organization, public or private. The private sector has a practical means for recognizing employees with money, gifts or advancement in the company. There is a humorous account of one retail sales event where a salesman in a high end clothier chain noted for its rich history of providing suits for many US Presidents, caught the attention of management. The store manager was directed to reward this high-end salesman with a dinner for him and his spouse. When queried, his response was, "Two hot dogs, two beers, under the lights at Yankee Stadium." Clearly recognition can be presented in many ways. The public sector is altogether a different story. Popular to some belief, military awards (citations) are not handed out like candy, they are earned and I'm certain that those of you who raised their hands as well as myself remember each event, task and circumstance in each citation was received. Recognition is important. It shows that one's work is appreciated. Certainly the recipient enjoys the attention and the main body of the group gets an account that their work will also one day be rewarded, but let's not forget management's role either. Good management should always be on the look out for contributions to the company or group.

Every group has its diversity. One of the reasons I enjoy the Garden State Amateur Radio Association is the diverse make up of this club. In our mix we have backgrounds in medicine, law enforcement, education, history, military, the sciences, and engineering, to name a bunch. There are even some of us dedicated to the spiritual needs of the community they serving as ministers, a priest and one rabbi, a commonality I was not expecting in amateur radio. Perhaps the Lord does listen, albeit in mysterious ways. We all have one thing in common, the satisfaction of using Amateur Radio to make contacts with like-minded radio operators in other regions of the world, whether it be voice, CW, or the newer form of data. I've observed that each of us contribute to our hobby in many ways. As an example, Art Olson's BIT-X 40 build projects and Cy Stanway's hosting of them is a tribute to this diversity.

I have a fondness for Clichés, those phrases or a full sentence that can provide multiple underlying meanings. Founding father Benjamin Franklin had numerous ones for almost every situation. I'd like to leave you with one of my favorites inspired by the Smith family I mentioned earlier:

The Flowers appear on the Earth, The Time of the Singing of Birds is Come, and the Voice of the Turtledove is Heard in our Land.

Thank You,
Chris Wantuck, W2NQB



MEETING TIMES

The next GSARA meeting will be on Wednesday, March 6 at 7:30 PM at the Red Cross. This will be a program meeting and the program will feature NNJ Public Information Coordinator Ed Efchak, WX2R whose talk is entitled:

Getting Above The Noise Level: A Rant On Growing and Sustaining Ham Radio Clubs While Helping Tell Others About Our Dirty Little Secret

Guests are welcome and refreshments will be served.



The second meeting in March will be held on Wednesday, March 20 at 7:30 PM at the Red Cross. This will be a regular business meeting. Be there! Guests are always welcome and refreshments will be served.

VE SESSION

The GSARA monthly test session will be held at the Red Cross Regional Headquarters in Tinton Falls on Saturday, March 23 at 11 am. The fee is \$15 and you should bring the original and a copy of any amateur license presently held and the original and one copy of any credit (CSCE) forms that you have (copies will be sent in with your test results). Also bring 2 forms of ID with one being a photo ID. For more information, contact Rich Bilon, N3RB at 732-972-1397 or n3rb@arrl.net.



Get your ham radio license this month!

Why New Technician Class Hams Are Not On The Air (Discovered on QTH.com)

Ron Henry KB9ZB

I teach a lot of classes for new hams and I note that as much encouragement I give them in class, only a very small percentage are actually on the air. I have been active in ham radio since I got my ticket, but



I believe it was my introduction into the amateur radio world that set the stage for my activity. I have talked to a lot of new hams who are on the air and or active in local clubs. I sense a common theme they all seem to have a few common threads: most were exposed to Amateur Radio by another ham and all have had some on the air experience. When asking about upgrading, the answer most given was they did not see any need to upgrade and or they didn't know anything about HF or have been on HF and further more saw this as a huge unneeded expense. Almost universally they have never tried it and most

all did not have any knowledge of what it takes to put up an HF station on the air.

I was introduced to the service through my military service and on HF, so for me the biggest reason to upgrade was the HF voice privileges. I must confess here since I had an extras class on base he let me use his radio to get on the ten-meter band. Also I did not upgrade to general until they dropped the code requirement, 5 was one thing 15 was a mountain I could not climb! That said, if we want more active hams that stay round we need to get them on the air, and having an HF station readily available I believe would entice many more to get active. Why HF? Mostly because there is so little activity on the 2 and 70 CM bands that the new hams will see very little need to buy a radio to get on the air.

I have talked to other's in cities with a very active 2-meter activity and they seem to have a lot of new hams get on the air and get active. It seems that it is not just voice, but the local repeater is a good source of information for the new guys to find out where to go to find out who else has their interest such as remote control and model rockets. I think the bottom line is we are the main reason why so many new hams are not active: we talk the talk, but most of us are not walking the walk.

Check out the full 2019 Calendar for the Club

- Meeting Dates
- Special Events
- Open Shack dates
- ...And More
-

Use this link to access the calendar: <https://www.gsara.club/2019-club-calendar/>

Now You Know!

By Bob Buus, W2OD

THE DISCOVERY OF HF SKIP

By Bob Buus, W2OD

When Edwin Howard Armstrong received the Washington Award from the Western Society of Engineers in 1951, he presented a paper "Wrong Roads and Missed Chances - Some Ancient Radio History" which was published in the *Midwest Engineer*, Vol. 3, No. 7, March 1951. The last half of this paper covers the discovery of "Skip" much better than I could so here is what Armstrong wrote:

"The ending of World War I released the experimental energies of a very able engineer of the British Marconi Company, C. S. Franklin. Following up some work of Marconi for the Italian Army with short wave directive beams, Franklin established a telephone circuit between London (Hendon) and Birmingham in 1920, on the extremely short wave of 15 meters.

That wave length was chosen - not for any expected advantage in transmission - but because it was easy to set up a reflecting antenna for waves of that order, and because loss of range, i.e., the "daylight effect" does not occur over so short a transmission path (100 miles). The Hendon and Birmingham transmitters had effective radiated power of about 4 kilowatts, and the system worked well. The significance of the Hendon-Birmingham circuit in this chapter of radio history will appear presently.

The radio amateur comes into the story at this point. American and British amateurs had been talking for years about organ-

izing a test to determine whether the wave lengths on which they were allowed to work - the commercially "useless" ones of 200 meters and under - could span the Atlantic - during the hours of darkness, of course. Such a test was finally organized in 1920, on the 200 meter wave length. It failed. In the next year, another test was organized. Though all prophecies were that it too would fail, in fact a score of United States amateur call letters were identified in the British Isles in December 1921, two of them from stations with power of less than 100 watts; and one of the stations, Station 1BCG in Greenwich,

Connecticut, succeeded also in transmitting a complete message.

But the signals could be received only during the night hours of the Atlantic path; they ended with sunrise at its eastern end and did not reappear until after sunset at

its western end. While the results caused a flurry of interest for a time, it soon died down, since a system that would work only at night was of no commercial importance. Though everyone was surprised that a 200 meter wave could span the Atlantic, neither the commercial companies nor those who took part in the tests were stimulated to investigate the shorter waves further. I took part in the construction of the 1BCG transmitter and also in the decision to dismantle it after the test, when the question of further investigation was discussed. Why investigate something with so fatal a defect - it could work only part of the time? Marconi seems to have been the only man whose



imagination was fired by the spanning of the ocean by the stations of the amateurs.

In a paper presented before the American Institute of Electrical Engineers and the Institute of Radio Engineers in New York City in June 1922, Marconi told about some of his recent work in radio including the work for the Italian Army with directive beams and the 15 meter Hendon to Birmingham telephone circuit. He suggested that radio has perhaps got into a rut by confining practically all its research to the long waves, and that more attention should be given to the shorter waves; and he summed up his remarks on the subject with these prophetic words: "I have brought these results and ideas to your notice as I feel – and perhaps you will agree with me – that the study of short electric waves, although sadly neglected practically all through the history of wireless, is still likely to develop in many unexpected directions, and open up new fields of profitable research."

Upon his return to England, Marconi began a series of classic experiments from the historic Poldhu site, which took him on a cruise in his yacht "Elettra" to the Cape Verde Islands in the South Atlantic during the spring of 1923. He had set up a transmitter at Poldhu on the longest "short" wave for which it was then practicable to build a reflecting beam antenna – 97 meters. He listened to the Poldhu signals as he cruised south, and found them to be extraordinarily good. In the Cape Verde Islands, over 2,500 miles from the transmitter they were far better than any signals that had ever been received over a comparable distance from a high power long wave station.

Marconi reported that even when the power at Poldhu had been reduced to one kilowatt, its signals at night were still better than those received from the highest powered transoceanic stations in the British Isles. While the usual disappearance of the signals during daylight hours occurred, Marconi observed that the signals lasted for a time after sunrise at Poldhu and that they became audible again before darkness had set in at the Cape

Verde Islands.

That observation led him to suspect that some new phenomenon was present in the short wave bands; and after his return to England he laid out a program of further experimentation for the following year, when he would compare the signals at 90 meters with those on a number of shorter wave lengths, down to the region of 30 meters. In 1924, he cruised through the Mediterranean to the coast of Syria; and in Beyrouth harbor in September of that year he made the astounding observation that the signals on the 32 meter wave from Poldhu, some 2,400 miles away, held in throughout the day – they were in fact as good as the night time signals, whereas a longer wave of 92 meters, on the same power, behaved as at the Cape Verde Islands. What Marconi was observing was transmission by reflection from that ionized layer of the upper atmosphere which later became known as the F2 layer, after years of observations had laid bare the mechanism by which the effect was produced. But as with Marconi's first discovery, his practical achievement was years ahead of the theory.

Returning to England within a month's time, Marconi sent notification of scheduled transmissions on 32 meters to Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada and the United States; and at the appointed times the daylight signals were received in all those countries. From the end of the earth – far-off Australia – came a report of successful reception for 23 ½ hours out of the 24.

These astonishing results became still more astonishing when it is remembered that Marconi was using only a few percent of the power of the transoceanic long-wave stations, and was unable to take advantage of his directive beam antenna because of the diversity of the paths of transmission to the various receiving points.

As sometimes happens with radically new discoveries, the significance of Marconi's results was not generally appreciated, at first, outside his own organization. As in the case of his original dis-

covery, what he had done was too far out of line with established teachings to be accepted in advance of a physical demonstration of the result. But while others hesitated, Marconi, supported by the brilliant engineering of Franklin, moved rapidly, and by the end of 1927 short wave beam transmitters were operating between England and all of principal parts of the Empire – and at speeds (100 words per minute) that no long wave transmitter or cable had ever approached. The long waves were obsolete and the cables had become a secondary means of communication.

Today, all but a few percent of the world's long distance radio communication is carried out on wave-lengths less than $\frac{1}{4}$ the length of the waves originally allotted the amateurs in the 200 meters that no one else wanted. Perhaps the best measure of the advance from the era of the "grounded" wave is that it is now routine for amateurs the world over, with a few hundred dollars worth of equipment, to communicate with each other, and the "working" of several continents in a single day is no longer the subject of comment.

We can return now to one of the great missed chances – the chance that every American amateur and radio experimenter had to tune in the Hendon-Birmingham beam telephone as early as 1922 and discover the daylight wave before Marconi. The Great Circle course of the Hendon beam lay across Eastern Canada and the United States. The 15 meter wave, as was later found, was a better daylight wave than those in the 30 meter range, though it was not effective at night. Full information about the Hendon station was available from Franklin's and Marconi's publications, and all necessary information about the most effective means of receiving such waves – the superheterodyne – had been published.

Had any radio experimenter in the United States thought to set up a superheterodyne for 15 meters and listen for the Hendon signals during the daytime, he would almost inevitably have heard them at some time during the day and he, instead

of Marconi, would have discovered the daylight wave. But no one had the imagination to set up a receiver and listen. We all "knew" too much about propagation; only a madman in those days would have proposed to receive 15 meter signals across the North Atlantic, especially during the daylight hours.

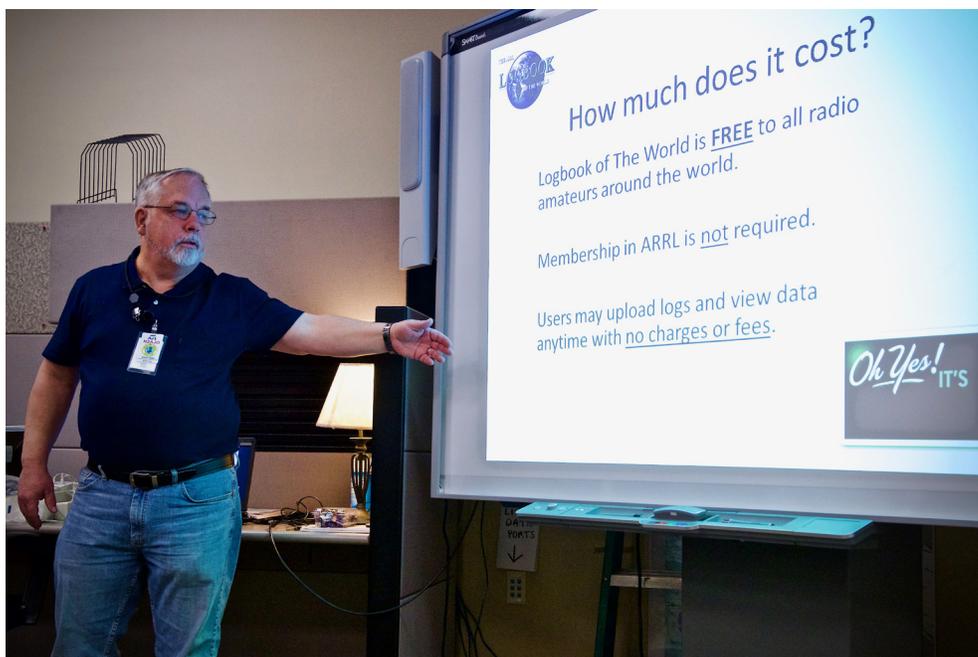
There is, however, a consolation for the American experimenters who missed the chance. The master experimenter himself, Marconi, also missed it. Though for more than 20 years he had made it a practice on voyages to the United States to take along receivers to listen to his British stations, when he crossed the Atlantic in the "Elettra" in 1922 it seems not to have occurred to him to take along a 15 meter receiver and listen to Hendon. Had he done so, and turned the Hendon beam to follow the yacht, he would have discovered the daylight wave two years before he actually did.

In retrospect, no one can regret that it was Marconi who made the great discovery. A reading of his account of his cruises shows that his was no chance discovery, but the result of a careful search by the one man who was able to define the limits of his own knowledge. Marconi set out on a thorough and painstaking exploration of what lay beyond those limits, and his search was rewarded by the success it deserved. To Marconi and those who worked with him goes the credit for the great discovery that put radio in first place in the field of world communications.

It is seldom given to a man to make two great discoveries, as Marconi did. He created the practical art of radio communication; and a generation later, when the limits of its ability to conquer distance seemed to have been reached, he came along with the discovery that made world-wide radio communication a reality.

The lesson of his work is clear-cut. He did not unlock the secrets of radio by exercise of some superior reasoning process. He studied the phenomena of radio as he encountered them, with

an inquiring and open mind; as he let Nature and his apparatus get the answers for him. The key to his achievement is that he was able to appreciate the limits of his own knowledge, and to doubt what others were ready to accept as dogma. For that rare ability and his infinite perseverance, he gained the reward that always awaits the true discoverer – he built better than he knew.” SO NOW YOU KNOW!



Art, N2AJ0, presenting Logbook of the World at that February 6 meeting

Random Shots



Sairam, KD2PCD, enjoying the meeting.
Sairam is newly licensed.



Jake, KD2MGE, listening intently at the February 6 meeting



to GSARA

The following new members to GSARA was voted in as an active member at the February 6 meeting:

Ken Hampton, KY2S from Howell was a past member of GSARA and served as President in 19XX. We're glad to see him back. Licensed since 1980, he holds an Extra Class license and is active on HF and VHF on phone and CW. His interest is Rag Chewing on the air. Ken is retired from HVAC-R Design and Sales and is a life member of ARRL. Please add to your Roster:

Ken Hampton, KY2S
18 Julies Way
Howell, NJ 07731-1700
732-245-0098
ky2s@juno.com

The following new members to GSARA were supposed to be voted in at the February 20 meeting but since it was cancelled, they will be voted in at the March 6 meeting:

Pete Fazzi, NA2J from Leonardo has been licensed since 1975 and holds an Extra Class license. He is retired. His amateur radio interests include SSB, PSK, Fusion and other digital modes on HF as well as VHF. An ARRL member, he is also interested in surf fishing. Please add to your Roster:

Pete Fazzi, NA2J
4 Raritan Avenue
Leonardo, NJ 07737
732-539-2918
wa2jcg@gmail.com

Tony Hardvig, KC2FZG from Brick has been licensed since 2000 and holds a General Class license. He is active on VHF and UHF Fusion with a Yaesu FT1D and FT-991A. Tony is an Aircraft Inspector. Please add to your Roster:

Tony Hardvig, KC2FZG
114 Freoe Drive
Brick, NJ 08724
732-255-1863
kc2fzg@comcast.net

Welcome to the GSARA!

Did you know....?

GSARA has an active outreach and inreach program.

- Get well notes to ill members
- Congratulations cards to new hams (with a 25 mile radius) and license upgrades
- Welcome cards to new members

MY FAVORITE QSL CARD

MY FIRST QSL CARD

By Bob Buus, W2OD

I've never forgotten my first QSL card which was the result of my first QSO on 40 meter CW.

What made the card particularly notable was the huge effort I had expended prior to receiving the card. Here is the story.

For my 12th birthday in 1949, I asked my parents if they could get me a communications receiver which I saw in the Sears and Roebuck catalogue. They agreed as long as it cost less than \$100. I looked at all of the models of Hallicrafters and National in the catalogue and picked the National NC-57 because it had the most knobs of the \$70 to \$80 receivers and I thought at the time the more knobs to twiddle the more fun it would be to listen. When it arrived, I hooked about 50 feet of wire to the antenna terminal and strung it in our attic. I was soon listening to shortwave broadcasts from around the world. It didn't take long to discover the radio amateurs using AM phone on 75 meters and I spent hours listening to their conversations.

To learn how to become a radio amateur, I ordered the 3-booklet set of ARRL publications for \$1. They were the License Manual, Learning the Radiotelegraph Code, and How to Become a Radio Amateur. From these books I learned that I would have to take a written exam with sample questions in the License Manual and

would have to send and receive Morse code at 13 wpm. The good news was that I could take the exam by mail since I lived 300 miles from the closest FCC examining office in St. Paul. I bought the 1951 ARRL Handbook and read it cover to cover and felt that I could pass the written exam. The code was a little trickier and for that I rented an Instructograph machine out of Chicago which sent Morse code from a paper tape with holes for the dots and dashes. By late 1951, I felt I was ready to take the amateur radio exam but the problem was finding someone to administer the exam. I bought the 1951 Callbook and painstakingly went through all the pages of WO calls to find 7 licensed amateurs in my town. Unfortunately, all were Class C holders and could not administer the test.

So I gave up on becoming a radio amateur and opened a radio repair shop in the basement of my parents' home.

In the spring of 1953, television came to our town with WDAY broadcasting on channel 6 with a transmitter about 70 miles south of us. A former resident NAMED Frank Thompson came

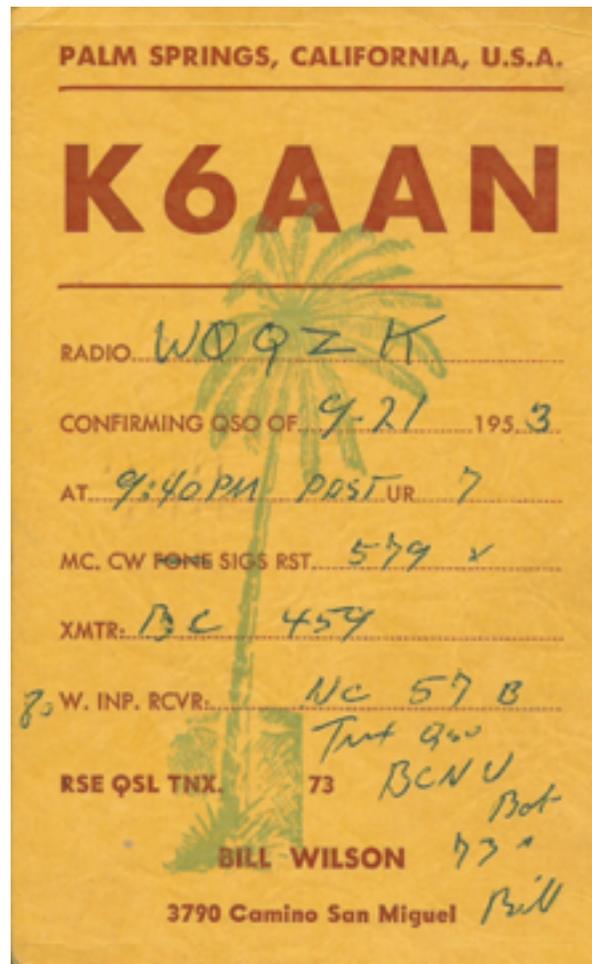


Figure 1. My First QSL Card

back to town to open a TV Sales and Service shop. My father remembered that he was an amateur radio operator and encouraged me to go talk to him to see if he was still an amateur and whether he could administer the exam. It turned out that he held a Class A (now called Advanced) license and would be glad to administer the amateur exam for me. So, I quickly again rented the Instructograph machine and got my code speed up to about 15 wpm. By July, I was ready to take the exam and ordered the package from the FCC. After I passed the code test and took the written exam, Frank looked the exam over and told me I only got a couple of the questions wrong and was sure that I had passed. He advised me to build a simple crystal-controlled transmitter for 40 meters to get started. So I built a 6AG7 crystal oscillator using a surplus 7133 kHz crystal driving a 1625 (12 volt version of an 807) power amplifier. The power supply used a 5U4G rectifier. By the end of August, I could brightly light a 60 watt light bulb as a dummy load with the transmitter and I erected a 40 meter dipole between the house and a tall tree in the front yard. I was ready to get on the air as soon as my license arrived.

On Monday, September 14, 1953 my license was waiting for me when I got home from school. I ripped the envelope open and found I was licensed as W0QZK effective August 28, 1953. I jumped on my bicycle and raced to Frank's TV shop to tell him the good news.

Frank's first question to me was "What are you going to do now?" I replied that I would get on the air. Frank said that was good but I should also join the ARRL (you had to be licensed to be a member then) since without them, there would be no amateur radio in this country. So, I went home, joined ARRL and ordered my QSL cards. Then I fired up the rig and tuned the 40 meter band looking for someone calling CQ.

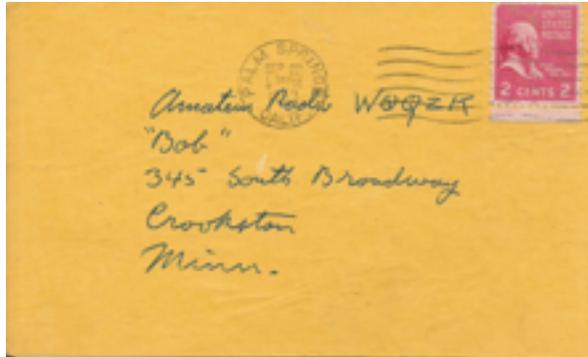


Figure 2. Note September 22 postmark

At 2020 that evening I heard a 40 meter station calling CQ so I gave him a call but he answered someone else. A little later, I heard another station calling CQ and again answered him unsuccessfully. This went on for the whole evening as I called six stations to no avail. Finally, at 2320 I tried calling CQ myself but no one answered after several tries on my part. The next evening produced the same negative results as I called stations CQing as well as calling CQ myself. This went on all week with the first page of my first log showing no results from my efforts. On Friday morning, I tried getting on the air before school started but obtained the same negative results. On Saturday, the 19th I tried getting on the air in the afternoon and at 1620 heard WNOQVI calling CQ in the novice band. I gave him a call and he answered me! I gave him a 489X signal report and talked until 1650. My log says "MY FIRST QSO!!!" But, the log shows no signal report, no name and no QTH. Were band conditions bad? Did he have a poor fist? Was I so nervous that I couldn't copy? We'll never know since the log doesn't say. I was premature to call that my first QSO.

On Monday, the 21st, I tried again starting at 1820 until 2320 calling 9 different CQing stations with no luck. Finally, at 2330 I decided to try calling CQ. At 2335 a strong K6AAN called me back on my frequency. That was the first call starting with "K" that I had ever heard. I gave him a 599X report and he gave me 579X. We chatted for 45 minutes with solid copy on both ends and sent each other our mailing address for

QSL cards since neither of us was yet in the Callbook. That memorable QSO convinced me that I might have a chance at being an amateur radio operator in spite of the poor luck the previous week. To add frosting to the thrill of that QSO, a QSL card arrived a few days later from K6AAN and was postmarked the day after the QSO (see Figure 2). Needless to say, when my own QSL cards arrived, the first one to be sent out went to K6AAN.

CAROLE PERRY, WB2MGP AWARD

Congratulations to Amateur Radio educator Carole Perry, WB2MGP, the first recipient of the newly established "Carole Perry Educator of the Year Award" presented at the 2019 Orlando HamCation. The award, to be given annually in Perry's name, recognizes outstanding dedication in educating and advancing today's youth about ham radio.



A fellow and director of the Radio Club of America (RCA), Perry is a past Dayton Hamvention Ham of the Year and a recipient of the ARRL Instructor of the Year award. She sits on the RCA Scholarship Committee, and she chairs the RCA Youth Activities Committee, which she established in 2007. She has moderated the Dayton Youth Forum for 31 years. Carole is also a director of the Quarter Century Wireless Association (QCWA) and is the Youth Activities Committee chair.

Credits: Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R (ARRL), QCWA

<https://hudson.arrl.org/index.php/2019/02/15/wb2mgp-carole-perry-educator-of-the-year-award/>

Please join us in congratulating her!

73

ARRL Hudson Division

Director: Ria Jairam, N2RJ

n2rj@arrl.org

Your 2019 dues of \$20 may be paid anytime to our Treasurer, John Chunga, KC2YWL. You may pay at any meeting where John is present or mail your \$20 payment to John at:

John Chunga, KD2YWL

109 S. Station Ave.

Avon, NJ 07717

Checks should be payable to GSARA. Thank you for taking care of this.

ARES/RACES NET

Did you know that there is an ARES/RACES net on the W2GSA repeater on the first and third Mondays of each month at 8 PM local time? You don't have to be a member of ARES or RACES to check into the net. We all should be comfortable with checking into a formal net as we never know when we might be called upon to help with communications in an emergency. All are welcome. Check it out!



Tuesday Net Report

The Tuesday night net meets every Tuesday on W2GSA repeater at 8:30 PM. Everyone is most welcome and, of course, you don't need to be a member of the club.

In the 4 sessions in February, we had 52 check-ins for an average of 13 per session. The following 25 members checked into this net (number of check-ins in parenthesis):

N2HGI (4), KA2IRQ (4), W2OD (4), WB2RPW (4), K2NPT (3), KD2PYO (3), KC2YNL (3), N2AJJO (2), N2BCS (2), KD2EJW (2), KA2F (2), N2FSB (2), AD7I (2), K2MFS (2), W2MJP (2), W2NAZ (2), K2CYS (1), NF3E (1), KB2FSH (1), KZ2G (1), WA-2JOE (1), K2KDC (1), AC2MB (1), W2NOB (1) and KD2OXR (1).

Mark your calendar so you remember to participate. The more participation, the more fun!



From the Archives

FIVE YEARS AGO

From the March 2014 Propagator: We are waiting for permission from MetroCor to change our repeater call sign from WB2ABT to W2GSA. Jeff, N2LXM donated a telephone interface that can connect two standard telephones. Bob, W2OD had two phones in his junk box so they will be installed between the red back door and the radio room at the Red Cross. Top DXer Bob Boule, W2OKM was made an honorary member of GSARA. John, KA2F wrote a nice article about former GSARA member Bud Waite, W2ZK who accompanied Byrd to Antarctica. Bob, W2OD reported on the visit John, KA2F and he made to Rusty Schmidt, K2LL (now SK) who was 104.

TEN YEARS AGO

From the March 2009 Propagator: Joe, W2KQ (operating 8P9KP); Frank, W2XYZ (operating 8P9FW); and Mike, KC2Q (operating 8P9MD) operated a DX-pedition from Barbados from February 15 to the 21st. Amateur radio equipment is being moved from the MARS building at Fort Monmouth to the Red Cross. Hams have been asked to help with the conversion of analog TV to digital by assisting neighbors who might be having trouble. The ARRL National Convention will be held at Dayton in May.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO

From the March 2004 Propagator: Vice President Marty, WN2DX tendered his resignation. Jeff, N2LXM volunteered to replace him and was voted in as VP by unanimous vote. Ray, W2NXG (SK) reported that Kid's Day on January 4 was successful and he is planning a June 14 Kid's Day. The Morse symbol for the @ symbol was adopted as AC run together as didahdahdidahdit (remember it as an "a" wrapped in a "C"). Bob, N2DR was trying to resurrect the weekly lunch at Middletown Burger King. Hong Kong and Denmark dropped the requirement for Morse code for their amateurs.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From the March 1999 Propagator: Phil Petersen, W2DME was on PBS television on February 15 in the "Rescue at Sea" program. International Marconi Day in April will be commemorated by OMARC's N2MO/IMD and QCWA's WA2GM/IMD. The program on

March 17 features Gary, KB2YTN (SK) and Mike, KC2Q talking about how to work DX. PSK31 is catching on in popularity. Palestine was approved as a new country and E44DX is actively working the pile-ups. ARRL has initiated an e-mail forwarding service for members who can use their call sign @arrl.net. The QCWA awards banquet is coming in May and will feature Frank, K2TVY talking about volunteer medical work in Guatemala.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From the March-April 1994 Propagator: This was a double issue because Bob, W2OD was driving out to Arizona for an extended stay. New members joining GSARA were Ken Brockel, N2SMT, Tom Cosgrove, N2VFK, Joe Puccio, KC2XM; Nathan Justus, N2MYF and Rich Griffiths, W2RG. Charlie Gspann, W2ZEE (father of Frank, WB2ABT became a silent key on February 14, 1994. There were nine listed Public Service events where GSARA members were asked to participate. The March 16 meeting will feature Dave Worrall, N2IRO (now WD2DW) talking about erecting wire antennas. The April 6 meeting will feature Jeff, N2LXM talking about 2-meter fox hunting

THIRTY YEARS AGO

From the March 1989 Propagator: New members joining GSARA were Mark Ziegler, WA2ILB and George Mazmania, KB2GIJ. Phil Petersen, W2DME started transmitting "The World of Amateur Radio" on WADB. The 18 MHz WARC band was opened to amateurs (the 10 and 24 MHz bands had already been opened.). There was significant discussion about no code licensing. Hudson Division Director Steve Mendelsohn, WA2DHF (later W2ML but now SK) asked for comments and included a form to be sent back to him.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From the March 1984 Propagator: The March 21 meeting will feature a talk by Mike Kaczynski, W1OD about a DX-pedition to St. Paul island. After a lively discussion of no-code, a letter was sent to the FCC giving the GSARA position. Unfortunately, 73 magazine reported that "W2GSA supported no code licensing." Our letter was misinterpreted by Wayne Green, W2NSD and an apology asked for. A list of 61 countries worked by W2GSA was published so we are on our way toward DXCC.



TRYING THE DIGITAL MODES

If anyone is looking for help with getting operational with digital modes (FT-8, PSK-31, Olivia, RTTY, etc.) please feel free to call on Paul, AD7I, if you would like some assistance. The best way to reach Paul is via email, ad7i@ad7i.net

Club Benefits



W2GSA CLUB NET

The GSARA weekly net meets each Tuesday evening at 8:30 on the GSARA repeater. Everyone is welcome to hear news of upcoming club events and activities, reports of the latest club news and everyone can share what they have been up to. Please join us. The more participation, the more fun!

QSL BUREAU

If any GSARA members wish to combine their QSL cards that are going through the outgoing ARRL Bureau, please bring them to the next GSARA meeting along with the label from a recent QST Magazine (you must be an ARRL member to participate in this program). Either John, KA2F or Len, WA1PCY will then send them on to ARRL at no charge to GSARA members. It couldn't be much easier than that to QSL. You are registered at the W2 incoming bureau, aren't you?

GSARA.CLUB/W2GSA.ORG

Have you seen the GSARA website lately at <https://www.gsara.club/>? Check it out often for updates, news, announcements and general club information. If you have not yet done so, send us a picture of your shack and a selfie for the Members; Shacks and Our Members page. There is a Members Only Page which will contain important links viewable by GSARA members only including the most current roster and the previous month's minutes from the meeting. Send your selfies to Cy, K2CYS at k2cys@arrl.org. Do you have any other great ideas for the site? Let Cy know.

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NOTES ON CALENDAR (see next page)

Large Call letters denote birthdays e.g. **AD7I** February 29. All times before March 10 are in EST and all times after in EDST. Contests are listed in the March QST, p. 88.

March 1 and every Friday – **Lunch at the Blue Swan Diner** in Ocean at noon. Table at back left.

March 1-3 – **ARRL International SSB DX Contest** from 7 pm Fri. to 6:59 pm Sun. See <http://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx>

March 1- **W1AW Qualifying Run** at 10 pm (10-35 wpm). See March 2019 QST page 100 and www.arrl.org/qualifying-run-schedule

March 4 - **Monmouth County ARES/RACES Net** meets on 147.045 +600, PL=67.0 at 8:00 pm

March 5 – **Old Barney VE Test Session** at 6:30 pm in Manahawkin. Contact Urb Le Jeune, W1UL at 609-296-5856 or urb@w2dec.com

March 5 – **Old Barney ARC Meeting** at 7:30 pm in Manahawkin, NJ. See <http://www.obarc.org>

March 5 and every following Tuesday – **GSARA Net** on 147.045 PL=67 at 8:30 pm.

March 5 and every following Tuesday – **QCWA News Net** on 147.045 PL=67 at 9:00 pm.

March 6 – **GSARA Program Meeting**. The program will feature NNJ Public Information Coordinator, Ed Efczak, WX2R talking about **Getting Above The Noise Level: A Rant On Growing and Sustaining Ham Radio Clubs While Helping Tell Others About Our Dirty Little Secret**. Refreshments will be served. Don't miss it!

March 7 - **HCARC Meeting** 7 pm at Holiday City South Clubhouse in Toms River.

March 9 – **OMARC Meeting** at 9:00 am at the Firehouse on 600 Sixth Ave. in Spring Lake Heights. Guests are always welcome.

March 9-10 – **QCWA QSO Party**, all modes from 1 pm Sat. to 2 pm Sun. See <http://www.qcwa.org>

March 9 – **North American RTTY Sprint** from 7 pm to 11 pm. See <http://www.ncjweb.com>

March 9 – **Set your clocks ahead one hour for Daylight Savings Time** when you go to bed.

March 13 – **W1AW Qualifying Run** at 7 pm (10-35 wpm). See March 2019 QST page 100 and <http://www.arrl.org/qualifying-run-schedule>

March 13 – **Holiday City VE Session** at 7 pm in Toms River. Contact is Larry Puccio, K2QDY at 732-349-2950 or e-mail at lpuccio1@comcast.net

March 14 – **JSARS meeting** in Riverwood Park Rec. Building, Rt. 527 and Riverwood Drive at 7:30 pm.

March 18 - **Monmouth County ARES/RACES Net** meets on 147.045 +600, PL=67.0 at 8:00 pm

March 20 – **GSARA Meeting** at 7:30 pm at the Red Cross in Tinton Falls. Regular business meeting. Refreshments will be served.

March 21 – **JSARS VE Test Session** at 7:00 pm Riverview Park Recreation Bldg., Rt. 527 and Riverwood Drive in Toms River. Contact Ed Genoio, WA2NDA at 609-971-2792 or wa2nda@comcast.net.

March 23 – **GSARA VE Test Session** at 11 am at the Red Cross in Tinton Falls. See page 1.

March 23 – **North American SSB Sprint** from 8 pm to midnight. See <http://www.ssbssprint.com/rules>

March 29-31 – **CQ WW WPX SSB Contest** from 8 pm Friday to 7:59 pm Sunday. See <http://www.cqwp.com>

MARCH 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				AD7I (29)	1 Blue Swan lunch Int. SSB DX CW Qual. Run	2 Int. SSB DX
3 Int. SSB DX	4 ARES/RACES 8 pm	5 N2EDX Old Barney GSARA Net 8:30 QCWA News 9 PM	6 GSARA Mtg	7 HCARC Mtg	8 Blue Swan lunch	9 OMARC Mtg. QCWA QSO Prty N.A. RTTY Sprnt Clocks Ahead
10 QCWA QSO Prty	11	12 Old Barney GSARA Net 8:30 QCWA News 9 PM	13 CW Qual. Run Hol. City VE	14 JSARS Mtg	15 Blue Swan lunch	16
17	18 KD2PCC ARES/RACES 8 pm	19 GSARA Net 8:30 QCWA News 9 PM	20 KD2PTB GSARA Mtg	21 JSARS VE	22 Blue Swan lunch	23 GSARA VE N.A. SSB Sprint
24 AC2PD	25	26 AB2N W2MJP Old Barney GSARA Net 8:30 QCWA News 9 PM	27 N2VEH	28	29 CQ WW SSB WPX	30 CQ WW SSB WPX
31 CQ WW SSB WPX						



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8 DONNER STREET
HOLMDEL, NJ 07733

First Class