



The Compass!

Official Newsletter of the Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club, INC.

October 2026

Volume 54

#10

Inside this edition:

- 2026 Events & Meetings
- AB2ZI's YouTube Picks
- Playing Ping Pong with FLDIGI
- A Spooky QSO...



Long Island's Friendliest Amateur Radio Club!





Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club, Inc.



Upcoming Meeting Schedule

2026

- **October 7th: Wednesday Night Open House**
- **October 8th: Board Meeting**
- **October 29th: General Membership Meeting**

- **November 4th: Wednesday Night Open House**
- **November 12th: Board Meeting**
- **November 19th*: General Membership Meeting**
(Nominations for Club Offices Tonight!)

- **December 2nd: Wednesday Night Open House**
- **December 10th: Board Meeting**
- **December 17th*: General Membership Meeting**
(Elections for Club Offices Tonight!)

****Note: November and December General Meetings are 1 week earlier
due to Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.***

Subscribe to us on the Web at www.gsbarc.org

GSBARC TECH OPEN HOUSE

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH!

WEDNESDAY NIGHT • 7:00 PM
at the GSBARC Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Everyone Welcome!

HELP • LEARN
BUILD • OPERATE

*Your Amateur
Radio Resource!*



GET HELP WITH YOUR PROJECTS

- Building kits & circuits
- Antennas & troubleshooting
- Go-Kit setup & portable ops
- Programming & software
- Digital modes & interfaces
- Test equipment & more
- Anything related to amateur radio!



LEARN & USE CLUB RESOURCES

- Get trained on the club's HF stations
- Learn the club's logging system (station QSOs, trailer remote ops & Field Day)
- Remote operation procedures
- Club equipment & operating procedures



ASK QUESTIONS GET ANSWERS

Bring your radio, laptop, cables, or that "mystery box" you've been meaning to figure out—chances are someone can help!

*No agenda.
Just help, learning
and good conversation.*



LEARN • BUILD EXPERIMENT • HAVE FUN

Work on your own projects, learn new skills, help others, or just enjoy talking radio with friends!



NEW HAMS EXPERIENCED HAMS VISITORS

*All are welcome!
Come as you are.
Leave with new
ideas and friends.*

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH!
WEDNESDAY • 7:00 PM
GSBARC EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)

GREAT SOUTH BAY
AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
W2GSB
COMMUNICATIONS FOR OUR COMMUNITY



gsbarc.org

On-the-Air Events

Suffolk County Marathon

The Suffolk County Marathon will take place on October 18, 2026. All posts are to be manned by 6:00 AM, and the marathon will start at 7:00 AM, running until approximately 2:30 PM. Many posts may be secured earlier. Volunteers interested in helping with this event should contact Suffolkcountydec@outlook.com.

POTA Event to Honor W2TE

The third annual special Parks on the Air event honoring W2TE will be held at Captree State Park Overlook on November 8, 2026, from 13:00 UTC to 20:00 UTC. All operators—including CW, SSB, and digital—are welcome to participate in this meaningful tribute.📻



GET ON THE AIR! JOIN THE ADVENTURE!

GSBARC SPECIAL EVENTS ALL YEAR LONG!

WITH CRAZY JOHN!

GREAT PEOPLE!
GREAT EVENTS!
GREAT RADIO!
THAT'S THE GSBARC WAY!

W2HCB JOHN
GREAT SOUTH BAY A.R.C.

FIELD DAY

OUR BIGGEST EVENT OF THE YEAR!

MARCONI DAY

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF WIRELESS!

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY WHEN IT MATTERS MOST!

HOLIDAY SPECIAL EVENTS

JOIN THE FUN ALL YEAR LONG!

POTA ACTIVATIONS

TAKE HAM RADIO OUTDOORS!

FIRE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

HAMS ON THE AIR BY THE BEACH!

AMERICAN AIR POWER MUSEUM

HONORING OUR HEROES WITH HAM RADIO!

73!

MAKE FRIENDS! LEARN! OPERATE! SERVE! THAT'S HAM RADIO!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



September started with a three-day weekend for most of us. Our POTA event took place on Sept. 5 at Heckscher State Park. A big thank-you goes to Steve, KD2X, for securing a location where we could set up.

Steve, KD2X: Steve had the first station up and running with his G90 and vertical antenna. Despite poor conditions, he made nearly 40 contacts.

Second station: My IC-7300MK2 with a Chameleon military whip and micro coil.

Erick, KE2IEG, and Ethan, KE2IEH: Their station used a G90 and a Radioddity HF vertical.

Two of the vertical antennas were mounted on truck tailgates. The other used a ground spike. Although overall band conditions were extremely poor, they initially appeared favorable enough to check in to the ECARS HF net on 7.255 MHz. The 20-meter stations performed well, and this was my first time using my new radio.

Several members joined the fox hunt. At first, they left their antennas attached, which led them well off course. After I advised them to remove the antennas, Kenny, KE2DFA, successfully located the fox transmitter and won the hunt.

Thank you to everyone who participated and made the event enjoyable: KD2X, W2KFG, KE2IQE, KC2KHT, KC2AQO, KA2D, KE2IEH, KE2IEG, KD2PIH, W2JPM, KC2SYF, NO2C, and K2RYD. If I left anyone out, it is because their name was not on the sign-in sheet. Whenever you come to our events, please make sure you sign in

Our annual Simulated Emergency Test will be held on Sunday morning, Oct. 17. Please be on the air and ready by 10 a.m. The scenario will involve widespread

flooding on Long Island. Each station that checks in will be asked to pass an emergency message to net control when called. We will be on the GSBARC linked system

We will need four shelter operators, two logistics operators, and at least four damage-assessment operators on the air. Net control will assign all positions, and no one needs to travel; this is a simulated emergency drill for training purposes only. Practice helps keep us ready for real-life emergencies, so I encourage everyone to take part in the exercise.

The Suffolk County Marathon is on Oct. 18. It is our largest annual public service event and marks our twelfth year supporting the runners. Thank you to all of you who have been there since the very first one. If you're new to helping out this year, welcome and we really appreciate your help. Public service is the way we give back to community and stay in eyes of the Town and County officials. Please be ready for weather changes: As you all know, Mother Nature can throw us a curve ball.

Halloween is Oct. 31, and many radio groups organize a "Pumpkin Patrol" net to help keep their neighborhoods safe. Because Halloween falls on a Saturday this year, please stay alert and use the GSBARC linked repeater system to report any pumpkin-smashing incidents wherever you are. Similar efforts are common upstate, where amateur radio operators assist New York State Troopers by monitoring overpasses from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. to help keep objects from being thrown onto vehicles below. Keep a watchful eye on your street as the little ones run around going house to house for treats.



Continued on page 6...

...Presidents' Message cont'd from page 6

Nov. 7: Join us for our third annual special Parks on the Air event honoring Walt W2TE/SK. The event will be held on Nov. 8 at the Captree State Park Overlook from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. CW, SSB, and digital operators are welcome. We hope band conditions will be better for this special POTA activation. CW operators should bring their own key. A big thank you to Steve KD2X for taking care of the permit for the day.

Volunteer Examiner Team: Our VE team continues to provide free license examination sessions. Thank you to Steve, KD2X, for taking the lead and to Nicole, AD2IM, for sharing her expertise in managing the sessions electronically. Congratulations to the following for passing their tests on Aug. 29: Daniel Wetmore: KE2JDS (Technician), Jiaxu Zhao: KE2JDV (Technician), Jeremy T Fortner, KE2JDT, and Robert T Kennedy (General). We look forward to seeing at our events and weekly open house Saturdays or Wednesdays. Please subscribe to our website to keep up to date with all we do.

The cooler weather is here, and we really need to get moving on the rest of the remote station. We need to finish this project up and we need all your help. Watch for announcements as to when we will be working on it.

Read on please, I have more information below:

We canceled our September board meeting because it conflicted with the SKYWARN training session. Thank you to everyone who attended the training.

Here are a few club business updates you may not be aware of:

- Our equipment and liability insurance policies have been renewed and are fully up to date, thanks to Bob, W2YW.
- We have received QSL cards from Lighthouse Weekend. Steve, KD2X; Walter, KA2S; and I have responded to them and done the mailings.

Portable Radial System Project

We have identified a useful project for our POTA activators: an elevated linked radial system for a 17-foot vertical antenna. Because ground-mounted radials can affect performance, Steve, KD2X; Scott, W2KFG; and I are considering this as a club build. As you know, radials for your portable setup can be an issue. There is an adjustable radial system out there that we can all build. It uses 20-gauge wire, and you can make a very resonant antenna. Radials are band specific and they can be elevated off the ground,

which also improves performance. If you're interested in this project, please let us know. Watch for a post on the groups.io page.

Project Interest and Cost

Before we move forward, we need to know who wants to participate. If we buy supplies in bulk, the cost should remain reasonable. We plan to begin with 25 sets if 25 members confirm interest. At that quantity, the fiberglass posts should cost under \$3 each, or about \$6 for the pair needed for each system. The silicone wire and connectors should cost about \$35 plus or minus \$5.

Materials

- Brightly colored 20-gauge silicone wire, such as orange
- Two 48-inch fiberglass fence posts with bottom spikes
- Red crimp connectors, male and female, with heat shrink
- Two medium-duty alligator clips
- Dacron line or trimmer string with a loop for attaching the radial ends to the posts
- A tripod for vertical or a table mount or versa mount will work also
- [Blank feed line adapter](#)
- Feed line lightweight with 5 ferrites at the antenna end is recommended

How the System Works

To use the system, connect only the wire needed for the band you want to operate on, adding longer wires as you move to lower frequencies. The elevated radials make the setup easier to deploy for portable operation and can improve performance compared with ground-mounted radials.

Testing Results

I tested a temporary setup in the yard with both ground-mounted and elevated radials. Using about 10 watts on 20 meters, I worked the same station in Sweden. After switching to the elevated radial setup, my signal report improved from 58 to 59+. The system also proved directional: after rotating the radials 180 degrees and working the same station again, my report dropped to 44.

Based on these results, I believe this system is worth building and adding to your antenna options. It could be useful for an emergency setup or simply for portable operating. It works with tripod-mounted verticals, though you will need a 5/8-11 to 3/8-24 adapter between the tripod and the vertical. The CHA Surveyor-A from Chameleon Antenna is one option. The system also works well with table-mounted verticals, and several versions of that mount are available online. For a mid-priced surveyor tripod, check Amazon or Home Depot, which offers several models online with free shipping. A Versa Mount from Quicksilver Radio is another option.

Next Step

If you are interested in building one, please contact Scott, W2KFG; Steve, KD2X; or me. Once we know how many members want to participate, we will gather the supplies and schedule a build day at the EOC. This would be a useful addition to your portable setup, and we hope it has sparked your interest. We will also work on group pricing for the support pieces, silicone wire, and connectors. Don't be left out, this will improve your portable stations' signal.

I would also like to thank KB9VBR for all the great YouTube videos on this project. Check out his YouTube channel.

[KB9VBRAntennas](#)

[KB9VBRAntennas: YouTube Videos](#)

[KB9VBRAntennas YouTube Shorts](#)

[KB9VBRAntennas/posts](#)

[Fall Propagation 2026 YouTube Video](#)

— John Melfi, W27CB 



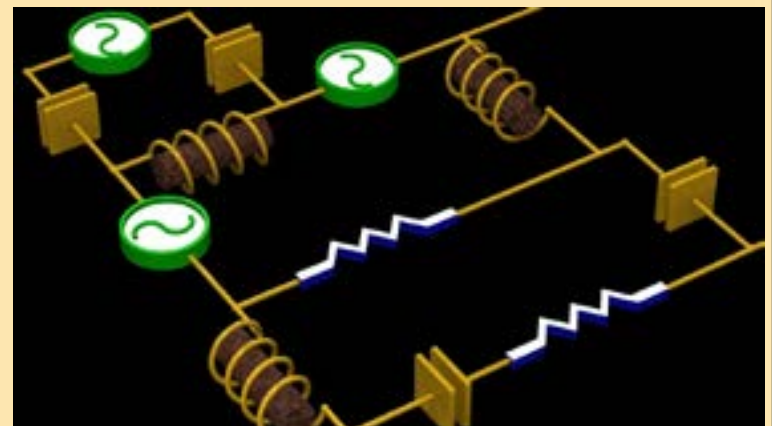
AB2ZI's YouTube Pics



Kirchhoff's Voltage Law, Explained Deeply



This Strange Wave Changed Physics Forever



Circuits -- Thevenin and Norton

The FLDIGI Ping-Pong Guide!

By John, W2HCB, Paul, KD2DO Kevin, AB2ZI,
and our AI Overlords...

Making FLDIGI Answer Back Automatically



Most of us think of FLDIGI as a digital modem with a waterfall attached. Pick a signal, select the appropriate mode, type something, press a macro button and make a contact.

But hidden among FLDIGI's many features is the ability to do something considerably more interesting: **make the program react automatically to something another station sends.**

Think of it as digital-radio Ping-Pong.

One station sends a particular word or sequence—**PING**, for example. The receiving copy of FLDIGI recognizes that sequence and can prepare a programmed response. That response might be as simple as **PONG**, or it can incorporate FLDIGI macro commands and other information.

With a little imagination, that turns FLDIGI from a program that merely decodes signals into the beginnings of an automated radio station.

The Secret Ingredient: FLDIGI's Notifier

The feature that makes this possible is FLDIGI's **Notifier**.

The Notifier watches decoded receive text for patterns specified by the operator. FLDIGI's documentation describes these patterns as regular expressions, usually abbreviated "RE" or "regex."

Don't let the term scare you. A regular expression can be extremely sophisticated, but for experimentation the idea is simple:

Look for a particular piece of text.

When FLDIGI sees a match, the Notifier can perform an action.

It can display an alert, put arbitrary text into the Transmit pane, or—on supported Unix/Linux installations—even launch an external program. Most importantly for our purposes, text placed into the Transmit pane can contain FLDIGI macro commands.

That last capability is where things get interesting.

Imagine two stations, W2AAA and W2BBB.

W2AAA transmits:

PING W2BBB

W2BBB's FLDIGI recognizes the programmed trigger and prepares:

PONG W2AAA

The concept can be expanded from there.

Why Call It Ping-Pong?

Because two properly configured stations can essentially toss messages back and forth.

Station A sends the "ball":

PING

Station B recognizes it and sends the ball back:

PONG

Unlike a conventional QSO, the operator doesn't necessarily have to type the reply. FLDIGI is doing the recognition and constructing the response.

The trick is making sure the automation eventually stops. If **PING** automatically causes **PONG** and **PONG** automatically causes **PING**, congratulations—you've invented two computers arguing over amateur radio.

That might be entertaining for about thirty seconds.

It probably won't make you popular on the frequency.

FLDIGI Macros Make It Powerful

FLDIGI has a surprisingly capable macro system. It supports as many as 48 macros arranged in four sets of 12. Besides inserting ordinary text, macros can control many FLDIGI functions.

For example:

<TX> places FLDIGI into transmit.

<RX> returns it to receive.

<MYCALL> inserts your configured callsign.

FLDIGI also provides commands for frequency and modem changes, logging, signal identification, delays, timers and numerous other functions.

A conventional macro might therefore resemble:

<TX>**PONG** de <MYCALL><RX>

Conceptually, that says:

Transmit → **send "PONG de [my callsign]"** → **return to receive.**

FLDIGI's macro system also includes <IDLE>, <WAIT>, <TIMER>, <AFTER> and <REPEAT> functions, opening the door to much more elaborate experiments.

A Simple Experiment

The best way to learn Ping-Pong operation is **off the air first.**

Set up two computers running FLDIGI. If possible, connect the audio output of one to the input of the other, either physically or through an appropriate virtual-audio arrangement.

Choose the same digital mode on both machines.

Now designate one machine as the Ping station and the other as the Pong station.

On the Pong station, configure a Notifier rule that looks for an unmistakable string such as:

W2AAA-PING-123

Why something that specific instead of simply "**PING**"?

Because decoded text can contain all sorts of things. You don't want your automated station firing because somebody happens to type the word "ping" during an unrelated conversation.

The more distinctive the trigger, the less likely an accidental activation becomes.

Configure the Notifier's transmit-text action with the desired reply. Depending upon what you are experimenting with, that reply can contain FLDIGI macro commands.

Now transmit the trigger from the other computer.

If everything is configured properly, FLDIGI should recognize the incoming sequence and prepare the programmed response.

You've just made one FLDIGI installation react to another.

Regular Expressions: Don't Panic

FLDIGI uses regular expressions because they allow much more flexibility than simply searching for a fixed word.

For example, instead of recognizing only one exact message, a rule can potentially recognize a family of messages and extract information from them.

The Notifier documentation describes the use of capturing groups. A capturing group allows FLDIGI to grab a particular part of the received message and use that captured information in the resulting notification

or response.

That means our Ping-Pong system doesn't have to be limited to:

PING

PONG

It could eventually recognize structured commands containing callsigns, identifiers or other information.

This is where a cute demonstration begins looking suspiciously like a very simple radio communications protocol.

What Could We Do With It?

Once FLDIGI can recognize a command and formulate a response, there are plenty of interesting possibilities.

A club could construct an automated **digital beacon experiment** in which another station sends a properly formatted request and receives a station identification or other predetermined information.

An emergency-communications group could experiment with **acknowledgment messages**. A receiving station could recognize a properly formatted test message and return confirmation that it was decoded.

It could also make an excellent **propagation experiment**. Send a unique request and determine whether the remote station can successfully decode enough of it to trigger the response.

Another possibility is a club demonstration. Imagine two radios at opposite ends of the meeting room with two FLDIGI computers exchanging **PING** and **PONG** messages while members deliberately reduce audio levels, introduce noise or change modes. It becomes a very visual demonstration of digital-mode reliability.

And, of course, there's the inevitable GSBARC application:

Remote station:

W2GSB PING

W2GSB:

PONG

Remote station:

W2GSB STATUS

W2GSB:

STATUS: SOMEONE FORGOT THE MICROPHONES AGAIN

The possibilities are nearly endless.

Continued on page 10..

Preventing the Infinite Ping-Pong Match

Automation requires some caution.

Suppose Station A is programmed so receiving **PONG** causes it to send **PING**.

Station B is programmed so receiving **PING** causes it to send **PONG**.

You now have:

PING

PONG

PING

PONG

PING

PONG...

Neither station knows when to quit.

Fortunately, FLDIGI provides several mechanisms that can help control automated behavior. The Notifier includes a **trigger limit**, specifying how much time must pass before an action can be invoked again. It also provides duplicate-handling options that can prevent repeated events from causing unwanted actions.

FLDIGI's macro system also contains timing functions, and a repeating macro can be interrupted manually.

Any automated experiment should therefore include an obvious **STOP mechanism** and be tested thoroughly before connecting it to a transmitter.

Remember that the computer may be generating the text, but **the station licensee remains responsible for the transmissions**.

Turn on SPOT

There is one particularly important detail that can cause considerable head scratching.

According to the FLDIGI documentation, Notifier matching occurs when the **Spot** function on FLDIGI's main window is active.

So if your beautifully constructed Ping-Pong experiment stubbornly refuses to Pong, check SPOT before dismantling the radio, reinstalling Windows or accusing the other operator of sabotage.

Sometimes it's just a button.

Take It One Step at a Time

A good progression is:

1. Get two copies of FLDIGI communicating normally.
2. Create a simple Notifier trigger.
3. Make the trigger produce ordinary text.

4. Add FLDIGI macro commands.

5. Add callsigns or unique identifiers to the trigger.

6. Experiment with captured information.

7. Add safeguards against repeated triggering.

8. Only then consider putting the experiment on the air.

This also makes a terrific club Tech Night project because the first successful experiment requires very little hardware. Two laptops and an audio path are enough to explore most of the concept without transmitting an RF signal.

More Than a Digital Typewriter

Ping-Pong operation illustrates something about FLDIGI that is easy to overlook.

FLDIGI isn't merely a digital-mode decoder with a keyboard attached. Its combination of received-text recognition, macros, timers, logging, rig control, scripting and external interfaces makes it a surprisingly capable platform for experimentation.

The Notifier can recognize information coming in. Macros can determine what happens next. FLDIGI can control transmit and receive, manipulate operating parameters and construct responses using stored station information.

Put those capabilities together and suddenly we're not just exchanging text.

We're experimenting with **machine-to-machine communication over amateur radio**.

And that's very much in the spirit of amateur radio: take something designed for one purpose, discover three other things it can do, hook two of them together and see what happens.

Just remember:

PING.

PONG.

PING.

PONG.

And somewhere in the configuration, please make sure there's a **STOP**. 

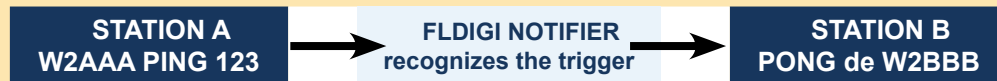
Note: The technical basis for the article comes primarily from the official FLDIGI documentation. The [Notifier](#) watches incoming decoded text using regular-expression patterns and can insert arbitrary transmit text containing macros; it also has trigger-rate and duplicate controls. The [macro system](#) supports up to 48 definitions and commands including <TX>, <RX>, <WAIT>, <IDLE>, <TIMER>, <AFTER> and <REPEAT>. FLDIGI's documentation also shows timer-controlled automatic transmissions, including a macro that transmits, returns to receive and repeats after a specified interval.

[FLDIGI official macro documentation](#)

[FLDIGI Notifier documentation](#)

FLDIGI Ping Pong Setup Guide

Make one station recognize a unique text trigger and prepare an automatic reply



Configure the Pong station

1	Open the Notifier	Open the Notifier dialog in FLDIGI and add a new event.
2	Choose Custom text search	In the Event pane, select Custom text search and make sure the event is Enabled.
3	Enter a distinctive trigger	In the RE field, enter a unique expression—not a common word. Example: (W2AAA-PING-123)
4	Enter the reply	In Append to TX text, enter: <TX>PONG de <MYCALL><RX>
5	Test before adding limits	Use Test with W2AAA-PING-123. Confirm the rule matches and the response is placed in the transmit pane.
6	Add and activate	Click Add (or Update after edits), close the dialog, and turn on SPOT in the main FLDIGI window.

What the response macro does

<TX>	<MYCALL>	<RX>
Start transmitting	Insert your configured callsign	Return to receive

Before connecting a transmitter

- Test with two computers and an audio or virtual audio path first.
- Set a Trigger limit and enable duplicate handling only after the basic rule works.
- Use a trigger containing callsigns or a random identifier to prevent accidental activation.
- Do not configure PONG to generate another PING unless a tested stop condition exists.
- Keep a manual STOP method ready; the control operator remains responsible for every transmission.

If it will not Pong, check SPOT first.

[Reference: Official FLDIGI Users Manual 4.2.00 — Notifier and Macros](#)

The Last QSO on 3.885

A Halloween tale for amateur radio operators



There are certain frequencies you don't use after midnight. Nobody writes this in the band plan. It isn't in Part 97, and you won't find it in the ARRL handbook.

You learn it from old hams.

Usually after they've had a couple of beers.

I first heard about 3.885 MHz from an old Extra named Charlie. He'd been licensed since the 1950s and owned enough Collins equipment to make a museum curator nervous.

One night at the club, somebody mentioned operating 75 meters late at night.

Charlie stopped what he was doing.

"Just stay off 3.885 after midnight," he said.

Naturally, everyone laughed.

Charlie didn't.

It happened the following October.

I had volunteered to straighten up the club station after a meeting. By 11:30 everyone else had gone home.

Outside, a cold rain rattled against the windows. The building creaked occasionally as the wind pushed against it.

Perfect radio weather.

I turned on the HF rig.

Twenty meters was dead.

Forty wasn't much better.

So I dropped down to 75.

Static rolled from the speaker like distant surf.

I tuned slowly.

3.900.

3.895.

3.890.

Then I remembered Charlie.

3.885.

I smiled.

There are two kinds of amateur radio operators: those who respect mysterious warnings from old hams and those who immediately tune to the forbidden frequency.

I tuned to 3.885.

Nothing.

Just static.

"Very funny, Charlie."

I reached for the power switch.

Then the speaker crackled.

"...CQ..."

I stopped.

A weak carrier appeared on the display.

"...CQ... CQ..."

The signal sounded strange. Hollow. Fluttery.

Like an AM broadcast coming from very far away.

I adjusted the receiver.

The voice became clearer.

"CQ... CQ... this is W2—"

Static swallowed the callsign.

I grabbed the microphone.

"Station calling CQ on 3.885, this is W2GSB."

Silence.

Then:

"W2GSB..."

The voice had changed.

It sounded surprised.

"W2GSB... you're still there?"

I frowned.

"Still here? Who is this?"

A long pause.

Then the man gave his callsign.

I wrote it down.

"Name here is Walter," he continued. "Running a hundred watts into a dipole. You're about five-nine."

"You're five-seven here, Walter. What's your QTH?"

Another pause.

"Babylon."

That got my attention.

"You're local?"

"I suppose so."

There was something about the way he said it that made the room suddenly feel colder.

We talked for several minutes.

Walter told me about his station. A homebrew transmitter. Separate receiver. Dipole fed with open-wire line.

I asked what rig he was using tonight.

He seemed confused by the question.

"The same one I always use."

"What kind?"

"A pair of 807s."

Now I was interested.

"Vintage station?"

"Vintage?"

He laughed.

"No. Built it last winter."

Lightning flashed outside.

For a moment the room went completely white.

Then I noticed the clock.

12:17 a.m.

"Walter," I said, "what's the date where you are?"

Silence.

The carrier remained.

Finally he answered.

"October 31st."

"What year?"

The carrier wavered.

"1958."

I stared at the radio.

"Say again?"

But Walter wasn't listening anymore.

His voice had become urgent.

"There's smoke."

"What?"

"My transmitter."

I could hear movement behind him.

Then coughing.

"Walter, shut it down!"

"I'm trying."

A loud crash came through the speaker.

Then another voice appeared faintly in the background.

A woman.

"Walter!"

The carrier began drifting.

"Walter, get out of there!"

He came back to the microphone.

"The door won't open."

I stood up.

"WALTER, GET OUT OF THE HOUSE!"

There was a tremendous burst of static.

Then nothing.

The frequency went dead.

I called several times.

No answer.

At 12:23, I shut off the radio.

I didn't sleep much that night.

The next morning I looked up Walter's callsign.

I expected nothing.

Instead, I found an old amateur radio callbook.

There it was.

Walter — Babylon, New York.

Licensed 1951.

I kept digging.

Eventually I found an old newspaper article.

The headline made my stomach turn.

LOCAL RADIO OPERATOR KILLED IN HALLOWEEN FIRE

The fire had started in the basement radio room shortly after midnight on October 31, 1958.

Walter had apparently been operating his amateur station when the transmitter caught fire.

Investigators believed he had been unable to escape.

The article gave the estimated time of death.

12:23 a.m.

I printed the article and brought it to the next club meeting.

Charlie was there.

I put it in front of him.

He looked at the headline.

Then at me.

"You worked him, didn't you?"

Nobody laughed this time.

"How do you know about him?"

Charlie leaned back.

"Because I worked him once."

"When?"

"October 31st, 1978."

The room became very quiet.

Someone finally asked the obvious question.

"Why 3.885?"

Charlie shrugged.

"That was his frequency."

Then he looked directly at me.

"But there's something you need to understand."

"What?"

Charlie pointed at my logbook.

"You answered him."

"So?"

"So Walter never calls the same station twice."

I didn't understand.

Charlie continued.

"Every twenty years or so, somebody hears him. He makes one contact. Then he's gone."

I felt relieved.

"Okay. So I'm done."

Charlie shook his head.

"No."

He opened my logbook and tapped the entry.

WALTER — 3.885 MHz — 0017 HOURS

"Look at the time."

I looked.

12:17.

"So?"

Charlie stared at me.

"That's not when Walter calls CQ."

The room seemed suddenly colder.

"That's when someone answers him."

Nobody spoke.

Finally I asked:

"Then who was calling CQ?"

Charlie looked toward the club's darkened radio room.

"I was hoping you could tell us."

From the other room came a click.

Everyone turned.

The HF radio was off.

At least, it had been.

The display suddenly illuminated.

The VFO changed by itself.

3.900.

3.895.

3.890.

Then—

3.885.

Static filled the speaker.

And from somewhere deep inside it came a faint voice.

"CQ... CQ..."

We stood frozen.

The voice became clearer.

"CQ... CQ... this is W2GSB..."

Charlie went pale.

Because the voice coming from the radio—
was mine.

Happy Halloween, and remember: before answering that weak DX station late at night, check the callbook.

He may have been waiting a very long time for your QSO.

73... 

TOONING UP





Babylon ARES/RACES Information

Div. 1: Town of Babylon ARES/
RACES

Net: 440.850/R, Sundays 8:45 AM

EC/RO: John Melfi, W2HCB,
631-669-6321

Suffolk County ARES/RACES Net:

Mon 2100 Local, 146.820/R (136. 5PL)

Current License Pool Expirations



Technician (Element 2)

July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2030

General (Element 3)

July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2027

Amateur Extra (Element 4)

July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028

Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club, Inc., currently has all **ARRL License Manuals** in stock and available for purchase at the discounted rate of \$30 (normally \$32.95 plus shipping).

2026 VE Sessions

- January 31st
- February 28th
- March 28th
- April 18th
- May 30th
- June 20th
- July 25th
- August 29th
- September 26th
- October 31st
- November 28th
- December 26th

All sessions are at the Town of Babylon EOC at 10 a.m., located in the basement in the rear of town hall. Please bring photo ID, a copy and your original amateur radio license (if you have one) and any CSCEs you may have. Nonprogrammable calculators are allowed. The exam fee is \$15 payable by cash or a check made out to "ARRL VEC."

IMPORTANT!

If you do NOT already have an FCC FRN (Federal Registration Number) you MUST [Visit the FCC Universal Licensing page](#) to register for an FRN to use on the paperwork.



Club Name Badges

Club name badges are available from **The Sign Man** (thesignman.com) of Baton Rouge, LA.

The badges which are 1-3/4 in. x 3 in. If you visit The Sign Man's webpage you can order the badges by using a drop down selection on the orders page and clicking on:

"Great South Bay ARC, NY"

GSBARC REPEATERS



GSBARC Repeaters

2026 Contests

October:

- 3rd - 4th: Collegiate QSO Party
- 19th - 23rd: School Club Roundup
- 24th - 25th: CQ WW SSB Contest
- Oct 31/Nov 1 EME - 50 to 1296 MHz

November:

- 7th - 9th: Nov Sweepstakes: CW
- 28-29 EME - 50 to 1296 MHz
- 21-23 Nov Sweepstakes: Phone

December

- 4th - 6th: 160 Meter
- 12th - 13th: 10 Meter
- 20th: Rookie Roundup-CW

Club Apparel

Want a shirt, jacket, hat, sweatshirt or T-shirt with a Great South Bay club logo?

We use **VIKING** (previously Mr. Shirt) located at 80 East Montauk Hwy. in Lindenhurst. We now have a group order page.

[Click Here to Place an Order](#)

Now you can get color matched backgrounds on your logo too. Check them out... ☺