



Episode 480 – Caryn Eve Murray – KD2GUT

Transcription Funded by: Martin Blustine, K1FQL

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:00:00](#)):

Caryn Eve Murray, KD2GUT, while inspired at a young age to ham radio. It wasn't until after a successful career as a professional writer and journalist that she rediscovered amateur radio in 2014. Her ham radio history was pretty thoroughly covered in a recent Ham Radio Workbench Podcast, a few weeks ago, our conversation explored her professional history leading to her reporting for Amateur Radio Newsline and her love for CW. KD2GUT is my QSO Today.

KD2GUT. This is Eric 4Z1UG. Are you there, Caryn?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:01:42](#)):

I am. This is KD2GUT. Hi Eric.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:01:47](#)):

Hi Caryn. Thanks for joining me on the QSO Today podcast. Let's start at the beginning. Where did you grow up?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:01:54](#)):

I grew up in the metropolitan New York area in Nassau County in a place called Westbury. And I lived there for the first 17 years of my life and then went off to college and there I stayed in the Washington DC area for a couple of years, returned back to the New York area because of something called unemployment college degree does not guarantee you a job. And that was lesson number one after getting the diploma.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:02:29](#)):

So for people who don't know the New York area, the New York area could be the tip of Long Island or it could be the Jersey side. So Nassau County is where ?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:02:41](#)):

Nassau County is, the western county of the two counties on Long Island. It is about 40 minutes east of New York City. It's not where I live presently, but that is where I grew up. And we were direct line of sight up in the sky for Kennedy Airport for anybody who's ever flown into Kennedy. One of the great thrills when I was growing up was jumping out of the car on the driveway just in time to see the SST fly overhead looking like a giant insect. And that was of course before that plane was grounded. But my God, that thing made quite an impression in the sky going overhead.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:03:27](#)):

So you're on the approach and the departure for Kennedy. I mean, was it minute after minute air traffic coming over?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:03:36](#)):

Thankfully, not that bad. We did see planes come and go on occasion, but I never paid attention to those, just the SST because you could not ignore that thing. I mean, you would think you were being invaded by a giant insect and it was already flying at a fairly low altitude.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:04:00](#)):

And it flew for years weren't its first flights mid sixties, so it might've flown for 40 years.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:04:07](#)):

My recollection on that is not that great. I believe I was already driving a car by then, so it may have been the early seventies. Yeah.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:04:23](#)):

Do you have siblings?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:04:25](#)):

I do. I have an older brother. He is four and a half years older. He was actually my gateway to amateur radio, although I did not open that gate until many, many years later. He and his friends would get on the air from his room and there was a flashing sign above the door to his room that said on the air, and whenever he keyed his mic, the sign would flash and he and his friends would be in there and the door would be closed to me.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:05:03](#)):

What was his call sign?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:05:05](#)):

WB2UJB Whiskey. Bravo Two Uniform Juliet Bravo.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:05:11](#)):

Is he still on the air?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:05:14](#)):

Yes. Well, he was off the air. You know the story. I would say 80 to 90% of amateur radio operators have that period of time where they stray from amateur radio and come back. And his license did lapse for a long time, college and work. So some years ago he decided to get his license back, and it was that year that I thought at age 12 I looked at the fund those guys were having and I wanted to be a novice and I studied cw, which was required. Then I didn't master it, I didn't really get too deep into it, but I began to learn it for my test, which I think was then five words a minute. And I studied electronics theory, which I had to study also to get your novice, and I didn't follow through on that because something distracted me. Horses, we'll get to that later.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:06:19](#)):

I said, I'm a 12-year-old girl, what am I doing reading a book on electronics theory? I'd rather ride a horse. So I kind of dropped everything and went with that. But what happened was the year that my brother decided that he wanted to get his license back, get on the air and get the station of his dreams, I said, it's been a while since I've been 12 and wanting that novice, maybe I ought to do this too. Something else convinced me the time was right too. We had had in the east coast here of the United States, we had had Super-storm Sandy where power and everything else was knocked out for days and days and days. Here at my QTH, it was out for 14 days. It occurred to me if I'd had that, I would've had communication. So I went and studied that summer. It'll be 10 years, 2024, I'll be a ham for 10 years. And I got my license, I got my tech and I got that at the Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club, which I ultimately joined. And the guys said to me, well congratulations now we're going to make fun of you until you upgrade. So I went home, I said, ha, and I studied and I got my general, which is the level of my license right now, happy with it. No time right now to study for the extra. So I'll be a general, I think for the foreseeable future.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:08:02](#)):

Normally I would ask hams at this point, how old they were when they got their license, but that was because I was thinking that they were 12. So I won't ask you how old you were when you got your license because I'm told I'm not supposed to ask, not by you, but in general, but let's go back to 12 years old if you don't mind, because I don't want to skip over the other story. And that is you were distracted by horses. Was that just a childhood distraction or did that become something that perhaps kind of set the tone for the rest of your life?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:08:40](#)):

Like ham radio? I was absorbed in it for a while. I took lessons and every other female of a certain age coveted one of those equines, which of course is off limits when you are a student and having to do other things that kids do. So I rode on the weekends. That continued a little bit into college, not too much. I was fortunate the school I went to in Maryland had horses on the property.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:09:18](#)):

A reason for choosing it?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:09:20](#)):

Not at all. No, no, no, not at all. It looked like a school that I would enjoy going to. It was in the Washington DC area. It was University of Maryland College Park. They're former agricultural schools, so they had horses, they had cows, they had their own ice cream factory. Some might choose a school

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:09:46](#)):

That sounds great.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:09:49](#)):

Some might choose a school for that, you never know. But yeah, I rode there. But for the most part, through my late teens into adulthood, I did not ride. I liked horses, but it wasn't something that I wanted to do until a friend made trouble for me some years ago and said, oh, I'm thinking of buying a horse and I'm going on a shopping trip up in Vermont. It's a riding sort of weekend. You want to come with me? And I said, well, great. I haven't ridden in 30 years. That's going to go over big. So I said, maybe I need to take some lessons at least to prepare for the trip.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:10:33](#)):

Are you an English style rider or a western style rider?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:10:37](#)):

English, I've only ridden English except of course on vacation trail rides, which are always western because that's easier to stay on the right side of the horse when you have a western saddle

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:10:51](#)):

Because there's a horn on the saddle.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:10:53](#)):

People think that's what it's for. They think it's an airbag or a seatbelt,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:10:58](#)):

A handle to hold onto.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:11:00](#)):

Exactly. I mean if horses were born with a horn built in that position, I guess that would make them safer. But yeah, people like the western saddle, it's also a deeper seat. You actually sit more deeply into the saddle, so you stay on there more easily.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:11:20](#)):

Were you a competitor as a teenager?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:11:23](#)):

As a teenager, I was in a couple of shows because that's what the instructors liked the kids to do. I am not an athlete, and so this was the only thing I could do without looking stupid. And it was fun. It was schooling shows mainly, which are not official shows. They're just little shows that your particular barn puts on, and I enjoy that. But most of the appeal for me was just enjoying the horse and enjoying the horse's company

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:12:03](#)):

Is mucking the stall part of the enjoying the company.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:12:08](#)):

It is fabulous because the horse looks at you when you're mucking and says, I got more where that came from. So yeah, they are never ending sources of amusement where that's concerned. And I guess I should fast forward to explain why I know that so well, ultimately, I did eight years ago get a horse and the mucking is a very fresh and new experience for me. Every time I go there to take care of him, he watches you missed a spot.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:12:41](#)):

The only reason I know this is that one of my sons took English riding lessons for a while. He was not much of a sportsman, but he was an animal lover that seemed to be very important to him. And so that's why I know about some of these things like mucking the stall. Why did you choose the University of Maryland and what did you major in

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:13:02](#)):

University of Maryland seems to be close enough to the New York area, close enough to home because I started college a little young, and so going too far away really wasn't an option. And I majored in what was then called arts and humanities. They reorganized the curriculum there. So I was an arts and humanities major with an emphasis in radio, TV, film and English. I was supposed to be a double major. I was ambitious about that. And

one or two semesters into it decided I was killing myself. So I would drop English to a minor because I wanted to get out a year early. I'm not sure why. I mean unemployment was waiting for me either way. Three years, four years doesn't make a difference. You're still sitting around eating ice cream sandwiches out of the freezer wondering why no one's hiring you. So I don't know what the rush was. I think that's probably my one regret. I don't have too many regrets, but my one regret is that I rushed college. I really should have stayed and had more fun.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:14:32](#)):

It's possible, Caryn, that I stayed too long. After seven years, my wife, my fiance said, if you want to marry me, you've got to choose a major and graduate.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:14:45](#)):

Yes. See,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:14:47](#)):

I tell people that was before the internet and the University of California at Santa Barbara had a million volumes in their library and a reader's guide and every magazine subscription in the world. So it was like if you wanted to deep dive on any subject that caught your whim, you could spend the entire day in the library. I was very happy to do it. So you thought with an arts and humanities major that you would become an educated person and did that work out for you? Did you become an educated person even though you mentioned that perhaps you might be unemployable?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:15:22](#)):

I became a college graduate. I don't know that that translates to being an educated person, but I did become a college graduate. I think the best education you get is out in the world. I think most of the things I've learned that are worthwhile and lasting are the things you learn every day when you get out of bed and begin your life again. But college was great because it gave a framework for problem solving.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:15:55](#)):

Taught you how to write?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:15:57](#)):

No, not really.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:15:58](#)):

Oh, really? How interesting.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:16:00](#)):

No, no, I didn't. The only writing classes I took, I took poetry. I took poetry. I took my first year in college. There was a poetry class I was desperate, desperate to take. And it's amazing when you're young and stupid and you don't realize there are things you're not supposed to do, you just go ahead and do them. And I went up to the professor of that class, I said, I want to be in your class. He says, we're a fourth level class. We're a senior level class. I said, well, I'm a freshman. He says, you're going to have to wait. I said, can I ask a favor? He said, what? I said, can I be in your class anyway? And if I can't keep up, you can throw me out. Okay. I really want to take your class and I don't want to wait a couple of years to take it. I don't know. He was a nice guy. So he let me take it and I got to stay in. And by the way, he and I became the best of friends, which our friendship extended well past my graduation. I'll always be grateful.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:17:12](#)):

And what was the subject?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:17:14](#)):

It was a workshop. It was a poetry writing workshop. It was poetry writing. One of those workshops where you put on a black beret and you drink espresso and you stand in front of the class and everybody goes, yeah, man, that's cool. Wow, that's heavy. That's deep. So we did that. It was just wonderful. I got to meet some very talented people. I mean, you cannot earn a living as a poet. And I remember when I contacted him after I finally got a job, my very first job as a writer at a newspaper, and I was so proud, and I wrote him and I told him what I was doing, expecting him to heap all this praise upon me. And he goes, you're selling yourself. That's so cheap.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:18:07](#)):

That's so funny. Well, this is where you kind of snap back into the real world, right?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:18:13](#)):

Yeah, exactly.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:18:15](#)):

Because unfortunately, you actually have to pay rent.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:18:19](#)):

Yes,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:18:20](#)):

You have to eat. My doctor tells me I have to eat.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:18:23](#)):

You have to eat at least. At least every couple of days. Yeah.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:18:28](#)):

So you've graduated and you took a job at a newspaper. Was that your first job out?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:18:32](#)):

No, I graduated and like I said, nobody would hire me. I wanted to be an advertising copywriter. I had done that. Actually, my ambition in life was to be a comedy writer.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:18:45](#)):

Really?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:18:46](#)):

Yes, yes. That's really what I want. I tell everybody, I will do this. I will be a comedy writer or I'll do advertising copy. The last thing I want to do is work for newspaper. And that was true. I'm not making that up. I would have bet all the money I had on the fact that I would never, never work for a newspaper. I have no interest in journalism whatsoever.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:19:14](#)):

Well, you were in the center, maybe you weren't in the center of, I think television comedy writing was in Los Angeles. Wasn't that the kind of the hub, but there was certainly a lot of comedy being written on the East coast. Did you actually apply for jobs and what was the response?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:19:31](#)):

Well, my role model, my hero, my idol is Mel Brooks, and I wanted to be him except he, but he was already Brooks and I didn't really like the hairline. I just sort of felt like I enjoyed having more hair on top of my head. But he was my role model in college. My senior thesis was a satire of *Great Expectations* done the way Mel Brooks had done some other, he had done *Young Frankenstein*, and I just felt I could tackle Charles Dickens in much the same way. And so I wrote *Great Expectancies*, which was about Ms. Havisham, one of the central characters in the novel. And she was pregnant forever. She was just pregnant forever. So that was, I forget the exact plot, but it got, I'll tell you, it did get so far as a reading, a courtesy reading at MGM, which still amazes me.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:20:51](#)):

This is the script of somebody who was maybe 19, 19 or 20 years old. It was my senior thesis, and it got strictly a courtesy reading. It certainly was not fit for production. And the feedback I got from the folks very generous, kind people was invaluable to me. It told me mainly that they thought the script was funny, which, hey, I'm good with that. If you tell me it's funny, I can ride on that for years. I want it to be funny. But it wasn't visual enough

that most of the humor was, it plays with your mind. It's not visual stuff that you see on the screen. And honestly, they were right. And it kind of reaffirmed for me so many years later, if your mindset is geared more toward radio than TV, you're not going to go for the visual humor. You're going to go for the stuff that tickles the brain.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:21:59](#)):

Like Gene Shepherd perhaps.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:22:02](#)):

Yes, exactly.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:22:04](#)):

Theater of the Mind, obviously with Young Frankenstein, "Walk This Way".

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:22:10](#)):

Yes.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:22:10](#)):

That's very visual. There's other ones I would say, but maybe they're not appropriate for the QSO Today podcast. But Young Frankenstein was one of Mel Brooks' most brilliant, I think.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:22:23](#)):

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:22:25](#)):

I laugh just thinking about it.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:22:28](#)):

Yeah, and I think I know which one you're referring to, but yes,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:22:32](#)):

They were all great. I wore black the year that Madeline Khan died. I was madly in love with Madeline Kahn. So

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:22:41](#)):

Yeah,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:22:41](#)):

But who wasn't right?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:22:43](#)):

Brooks picked his cast. They were real repertory, and I think they moved as one. The actors contributed to the script. It was really a dynamic experience to create those movies, and he was pretty open to it. I think Mel Brooks, the people, other than a few fights he had with Gene Wilder, which ended well, I think most of his arguments were with the studio censorship.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:23:15](#)):

Could he do *Blazing Saddles* today? Again, it was one of the most brilliant comedies put on film.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:23:22](#)):

Absolutely. And without getting too deep in the weeds on that issue, I just want to say what a shame he couldn't do it today. I think we all need to laugh more and being a little

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:23:36](#)):

Well, well, it's funny, those movies *Dracula Dead And Loving It*. I took the whole family and my wife left the theater because me and my two sons were howling. It was so funny. With the *Dracula dead and loving it*, you had to watch the Francis Ford Coppola film the year before he did the thing with Gary Oldman in *Dracula*. So there were a lot of sight gags that he pulled off.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:24:00](#)):

Yes,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:24:01](#)):

That he did in that Mel Brooks stole for *Dracula Dead and loving it*. So you saw how ridiculous the Oldman movie was and how absolutely brilliant the Mel Brooks movie was.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:24:14](#)):

Yeah. And genius is, what did they say? Genius is in knowing who to borrow from.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:24:23](#)):

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Eric 4Z1UG ([00:25:31](#)):

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Eric 4Z1UG ([00:26:38](#)):

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So what happened? You're getting your script back. Someone read it, you're funny. Why didn't you keep doing it?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:27:44](#)):

I'm not sure. I did briefly even take a class. I think it was the new school in Manhattan for stand-up. Why didn't I do it? I think I'm basically a behind the scenes kind of person. It takes a lot for me to get out there, and I think it would have taken too much out of me to pursue that path. And there's probably a piece of me that knew that, that I need consistency and a routine every day. Living on the edge of hysteria is fun in your teens, but I don't know that that sits well as you enter adulthood,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:28:35](#)):

So you still have to eat. And there was this serious side of you. Did you have some influence from your family as well to kind of maintain that serious side?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:28:45](#)):

No, they kind of let me do what I wanted. I am grateful. They always showed support. I think they foolishly or not thought I had good judgment. I don't know why, but I'm pretty happy with that. I think they were my biggest fans. My dad certainly encouraged me to be silly. He was very silly. My mom encouraged me to have practical skills and to always have those. She pretty much compelled me to take typing and compelled me to take Gregg Shorthand for anybody who remembers shorthand. I said to her, oh, you're making me do this because you think I'll only be a secretary like you. And she said, you'll always need these skills no matter what you do. I'm sorry. I gave her a hard time about that. I did, of course, take the classes she was paying for them anyway, and I did. Well, I'm sorry I gave her a hard time because eventually typing and shorthand became something I needed in college when I could write down the entire lectures in my classes and transcribe them later. And certainly as a newspaper reporter in New York City, that became invaluable for two reasons. Reason number one, I could quote people accurately while maintaining eye contact. And best of all, if they looked at my notebook, they had no clue what I was writing down because it just looked like a bunch of squiggles to them.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:30:37](#)):

You had to take a real job. And so you took a real job as a newspaper reporter. Were you a private stringer or did you actually work for one of the newspapers?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:30:45](#)):

Well, remember Eric, I had no news background when I left college, when I graduated, all I had done were some radio commercials. I had worked for a radio station for a while, writing and producing commercials for them. I was their copywriter. And at first I was unpaid because I told 'em I just wanted to work for them. And they said, well, we're not hiring. And I said, I didn't say you had to pay me. I just want to work for you. And they ended up hiring me, which was a gift because they're full-time copywriter left and there I was. So that really worked out beautifully. But again, as you say, you have to eat and radio, small market radio does not pay well. So from there, I fulfilled my worst nightmare. Are you ready for this? My worst nightmare. And I became a secretary. A secretary. The very thing I said to my mother, you think I'm just going to be become a secretary? Well, I became a secretary.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:31:53](#)):

And your mother never said anything about it.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:31:56](#)):

Never. Isn't that nice? Isn't that nice?

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:32:00](#)):

My guess is your mother was the same generation as my mother, and they were very classy about not rubbing it in.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:32:08](#)):

Did not rub it in. And she could have, and she was very good at that, but she did not.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:32:14](#)):

Where were you a secretary at

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:32:16](#)):

Ready for this? I was going to say, I can see you. You're sitting down, so I don't have to say, are you sitting down a newspaper? How about that? I worked at a newspaper, which is fine. I didn't want to,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:32:28](#)):

But you can't say which one.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:32:30](#)):

It was then called the Long Island Newspaper. It was Newsday based in Garden City, New York. And at that time of the top 10 papers in the country,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:32:41](#)):

Was that an afternoon paper or evening paper?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:32:44](#)):

When I was growing up, I grew up reading it. It was an afternoon paper. It did eventually become a morning paper.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:32:51](#)):

Got to the big time.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:32:54](#)):

Yeah, yeah.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:32:55](#)):

When I grew up, that was also the afternoon papers were kind of the wanting to be the morning papers.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:33:02](#)):

Exactly. And I cursed under my breath. When you're young, you don't see the direction your life is taking. And when you're young, you don't see that there's a bigger picture. You just see that you're a secretary, you have a college degree and you're miserable, and you go home and you eat ice cream sandwiches out of the freezer. And I did a lot of that. So I made friends there. They thought I was funny, imagine that they liked me and they let me write for their in-House newsletter, the employee newsletter. I said, I want to write for you guys. Can I at least write for your in-House newsletter? I'll interview employees about interesting things they're doing. And I did that. Then I started doing book reviews, freelance for the newspaper. I was secretary to the national desk in the late afternoon and into the evening I was secretary to the three managing editors and the executive editor.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:34:13](#)):

I was a good secretary. I would hire myself. I was very good. I could type fast. I could take shorthand. I didn't like getting coffee for people because I figured they could get their own coffee. I had a little bit of attitude, but I was pleasant and I did my job, but I was miserable because the words I was writing were someone else's words. As a secretary, you are a scribe, you're not a writer. And I was frustrated and I was running out of ice cream sandwiches. And so one night I went into the managing editor's office, he had called me in and he was ready to dictate a memo. And he looks up at me and he says, why do you have that miserable look on your face? And I said, it's because I'm miserable. And he said, and why are you miserable? And I said, because I'm a secretary and that's not what I want to be.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:35:33](#)):

He says, okay, sit down. Listen to me. He says, we can't do anything to help you. But it's like a farm team. There are certain papers that take that hire from other places, says We know they're hiring up at the Middletown Times Herald record. There's a paper up in the Hudson Valley of New York. They need people. Why don't you try out there? And if they like you, you can go with our blessings. We'd be happy for you. And like I said, Eric, I've been very lucky along the way. I think I could not have had the career I've had without these people. These are good people. So I went up to the Hudson Valley and I did my one week tryout, and they offered me a job at the end of that week as a copy editor on the news desk.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:36:48](#)):

Well, again, keep in mind I was in my early twenties, so no filters. No filters. And I said, well, I don't really have a news background. I don't really like news and listen to this. I mean, I couldn't do this now. I don't really like news. Don't you have anything like in features and lifestyles? And they said, yeah, as a matter of fact, we do. Would you like to work for features and lifestyles? And I would love to, and as long as you're hiring me as a copy editor, can I write for you also? And they said, you can do whatever you want. So I

took the job, went back, gave notice at Newsday where I was secretary. They sent me off with a really high class party, lots of good wishes, a fake front page making me the story of the day. That's a newspaper tradition.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:37:46](#)):

You always give a front page to somebody who's leaving and off. I went to spend three years in Middletown, New York as a editor and writer, and it was a wonderful experience. And Newsday called me two years into it and asked if I would come back and what I try out on the copy desk as a copy editor. And so I said, sure. And I came back. It would've probably doubled my salary, but I was bored and I turned the job down. And that's crazy. I know. But I sort of knew myself. And I said to them, listen guys, I appreciate that you've kept in touch with me, but if I took this job purely for the money, I think you'd be getting a very unhappy person. I think I have a lot more to learn before I come back here. And I stayed up there and they called me a second time, I think about six months later, and I said, it just is not the right time. I don't feel like I have my footing yet. I mean, I'm on the farm team now and you're calling me back to the big leagues and I'm just not ready. I just don't feel I'm ready.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:39:15](#)):

A year later, they called me again. They said, this is the last time we are starting an addition in New York City. We need reporters. Would you like to come down and talk to us? And this scared me. This terrified me because again, remember, I never took journalism. I have no news background. And not only am I being offered a job as a news reporter, it's in New York City. I mean, look at the papers you have there. You're asking me to join a team of veteran reporters. I was 24 years old, but they did it. They liked me and I was a hard worker. And they told me later, that's the only reason because they liked me and they knew I'd work hard. To go back to your earlier question, Eric, did I leave college educated? Yeah, perhaps I did. Perhaps I did to some degree. But my real education began when I came back to New York City and worked as a reporter and got really black and blue and bruised learning. I mean, you don't learn in a better classroom than New York City.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:40:47](#)):

What were you writing about in New York City? Obviously New York City is a universe of things that you could write about.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:40:54](#)):

Yeah. Well, in general, reporters begin doing general assignment, what I call crash and burn stuff. So shootings, police blotter, hostage situations, hostage situations, Witt, armed hostage takers. You have building collapses, fires, riots, politics, the most violent thing of all politics. And

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:41:28](#)):

Aren't those the primo positions? You would think that that would be what the stars would want because if it bleeds, it leads.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:41:36](#)):

If it bleeds, it leads well, there's enough to go around in New York City, that's for sure. So everybody gets to do a little bit of that. Yeah, eventually I covered the state legislature. Eventually I got assigned to cover Mayor Ed Koch based at City Hall. I was apprenticed to a lot of good people in the beginning. Everybody was very kind and we had our stars, but the stars here were usually the columnists. They really were the, we had brilliant minds. Murray Kempton, who I felt was a, probably should have been a Greek philosopher, but he was born too late. He even looked like a Greek sculpture. He was an older man with chiseled features and a brilliant, brilliant way of writing. I was in federal court covering a organized crime trial for the paper one season, and Murray was in there seated a few benches away.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:42:46](#)):

Murray was already a much older man at the time, and I was covering it for the news story, and Murray was there as the columnist, and I looked over at him. Murray was slumped over, his eyes were closed, and he was fast asleep. This was very common with Murray. He would do that. And the next day he wrote the most brilliant column. And I thought to myself, that man does better work when he sleeps than most of us do when we're awake. You get to that point when you talk about somebody with a superstar talent that was Murray Kempton. I'm happy to say it. I worked with or near the best of the best. And what that does is it drives you and inspires you to be the best you can be. Not in a competitive sense, but just because you're exposed to what human potential can be and you want to realize what you can do in your life.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:44:00](#)):

Now, if we were going to kind of, obviously there's a lot of years between the Koch administration and the point at which you reentered amateur radio, but did you have a number of different kinds of careers after that, or did you actually stay in journalism?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:44:16](#)):

I got into journalism from the writing and editing standpoint in 1976 and stayed in it until 2019. My long run was with the City edition called New York New State, which was closed by Times Mirror, which owned it at the time. And many of us were sent out to the suburban edition. So I stayed on with the suburban edition. I became a business writer. I became a small business columnist, and then eventually a copy editor on the features and then the news desk. And I also wrote a Sunday column, Sunday feature column for the Sunday. Well was then the Sunday magazine. I've had a lot of incarnations there. It's kept things interesting.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:45:14](#)):

You've done something very interesting to me because before we started, I asked you if you had been a journalist all the way up to the point of going to Newsline, and you said that you weren't a journalist, so somehow you see yourself not as a journalist even though you were writing for newspapers. Is there a different, in terms of the way that you're defining what a journalist is?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:45:39](#)):

Yeah, I think so. I think in the strictest sense, I could fill out a form, a survey form and ask occupation. And yes, I would write journalist. I'd probably write writer. I think more than journalist. I think of journalist as somebody who knows they want to write for a newspaper and is focused on news. My problem is that I like comedy writing. I've written commercials, journalism and commercials are on the opposite ends of the spectrum. And I've written ad copy and produced radio commercials. So can a journalist do that? Well, the lines are more blurred now in 2023, but back then one did not touch the other. They were in separate rooms. So my thought is I'm more a writer than a journalist, but because of my years in the newspaper business, I've learned journalism. I practiced journalism. My heart and soul is just in writing.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:46:58](#)):

I mean, think back to what my former college professor said when he heard that I was working for a newspaper, you would think he expected, let's just say the word. He used conjured images of me standing under a red light on a street corner, and he did use a word. I said to him, I have to eat. I have to eat. It's still riding. And I basically said to him, just because it's prose doesn't mean it cannot have elements of poetry. You're not going to do that for a crime scene story, but certainly you're going to do it for a feature story. Words or words, every word.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:47:48](#)):

I read newspapers today, it seems that every reporter wants to be a columnist. I see a lot of editorial on every page about the editorial page where the big columnists get to put their stuff. But I don't see that journalists today follow the traditional path of journalists. At the time that you entered the business,

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:48:09](#)):

No,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:48:10](#)):

The writing that you learned to do is so invaluable. Are you applying those same skills to say Amateur Radio Newsline?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:48:18](#)):

Yeah. I'm glad you asked. Yeah, I'm glad you asked. I wanted to make that point. I don't feel comfortable criticizing where journalism is going now, but I'll just say this and you can draw a conclusion from that. I left the business in 2019. The newspaper had a buyout, which I had been waiting for forever, and happily took it and moved on to the rest of my life. And I'm very glad. And let me say upfront, I'm very grateful for all the years I had and every single person who helped me. So I have only the best and happiest memories of all those years, and that is what I bring to Newsline. I not what you hear and see presently, which is different. For better or worse, it's different. We don't get into the he said, she said of the story. In other words, we don't get into personal disputes, we don't get into nuance, we don't get into rumor, and we do not get into politics, nor does amateur radio, nor should amateur radio.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:49:53](#)):

So Newsline is a blend of, I hope, old school journalism and traditional amateur radio ethics. And that's what I hope every week people hear along with some funny stuff, Hey, I get to do comedy writing too. Sometimes I really do, because the showpiece of our newscast is the kicker. It's the end piece. And we've had some real fun with that. And you can have fun. You can do the news and have fun. But I think when it comes down to the serious stuff, you have to realize you are responsible for telling people what they either need to know or want to know. You have to do it responsibly. You can't take one person's word for it. You have to check your facts. You have to check their facts, and you have to be sure that when the newscast goes out, the world is hearing what they should be hearing correctly without bias. And we hope without error, and certainly without malice, and most definitely without agenda,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:51:13](#)):

Probably most of the papers I see, if you want to get details, it's impossible from the papers. Every column on the front page is somebody's native ad or commentary or editorial or their viewpoint. And all you want to know is what's happening.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:51:33](#)):

I credit my history degree as one I'm able to write, and two, I'm able to dig because you had to dig and you had professors that were telling you, well, where's your primary sources? Nobody is going after primary sources anymore, except maybe Newsline. That's what I appreciate so much about Newsline on the one hand, but this is what I'm not appreciating about most of the media that I'm seeing these days is because it has an agenda and it's being purchased by whoever is paying the bills, the advertising bills. I feel like what a waste. It would be nice to have a paper on the breakfast table that actually had some news in it.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:52:10](#)):

Eric, I think you're calling it the way it is. I think there are a lot of people who hear what you're saying and would be nodding their head in agreement.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:52:20](#)):

And by the way, Caryn, the people that are writing don't have the education. They don't have history, they don't have literature. They may know how to write in the formula that they're being taught to write, but they're lacking so much.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:52:35](#)):

You need context. You do you absolutely

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:52:40](#)):

Right to actually understand who the players are, but it doesn't sell Ozempic.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:52:47](#)):

Yeah, this is a problem. This is a problem because the business is killing the business, essentially. It's at. And even for people, for instance, one of the things I have been doing since my departure from News-papering for a while, I was writing freelance stories for a software development magazine. Now you might ask, wow, what do you know about software development? And I might answer squat. I know nothing about software development. So basically this is marketing, marketing via cookies and all kinds of the changes that are going on right now with the way things are sold, how we are tracked. I had to go study it up on it in order to sound intelligent in an interview and ask questions of these people who are going to use jargon with me. And I have to know what the jargon means. What I'm saying is that no, a journalist should not be expected to be conversant in absolutely everything. If you're covering politics, you eventually learn about politics. If you're covering science, you should have a background. But from your experience as someone familiar with history, you know how to dig. And that's really the key skill.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:54:25](#)):

Well, you always got your papers back if you didn't. Yes. If you were making assertions that weren't supported by the facts, not the facts made up, but by primary source documents, you were lambasted.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:54:40](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:54:41](#)):

In a kind way maybe, or even in front of your peers at a seminar. So you were very careful to make sure that what you were writing and the assertions you were making had some facts behind them.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:54:55](#)):

Oh, absolutely. A good journalist, a good writer, a good researcher, if nothing else knows how to dig, and you have that skill, you know what that's worth. I was shocked, but not too shocked when about 12 a dozen or so years ago, I did go back to college. I thought I would get a degree and become a dietitian because I could see where newspapers were going. And I just felt I could make a difference, particularly for the geriatric population. Were not fed very well in certain congregate care. And I thought I would study that, and I loved it. I ultimately didn't get the degree. I couldn't keep up with the requirement of doing an internship for a year. Unpaid grownups can't do that. So I did drop out. But I will say this, my classmates who were many years my junior, we were all taken to the campus library to learn how to use the library, which, oh boy, this was an eyeopener. The librarian asked How many people consider Wikipedia a reliable resource? And you talk about people citing their sources. And I would say, yeah, three quarters of the hands went up.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:56:30](#)):

This is an issue. There's no more critical thinking anymore. People absorb and accept without thinking critically. There are ways a Newsline does try to do this. Newsline will present facts, will present a story without an agenda, without anybody's agenda, and let the listener come to their own conclusion based on what they hear. And we try to use the original source if we can reach them. If not, we quote the secondary source saying the secondary source quoted the primary source. We don't do it quite that awkwardly, but we try to let people know, we've made an effort to reach people. We do the best we can. It's an honest effort, nothing more than that. And I think to some degree people, it's not that people are getting lazy. I think people are under a lot of pressure to produce more and to attract the money, attract the support, attract the advertisers, attract the readers. And so you have to pump it up. We were told that at the newspaper, oh, the lead on that story is really kind of dull. Let's pump it up. Let's, let's get the reader into it.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:57:55](#)):

Do you think that when you went to the library with that class, that for many of those people, it might've been the first time they'd ever been in a research library?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:58:04](#)):

Yes, absolutely.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:58:06](#)):

I was afraid you were going to say that. We're probably pretty close to the same age. And we grew up at a time when perhaps our mother usually took us to the library once or twice a week because she had to keep up with her books. And so it gave us time to browse. And so I think I grew up in the libraries, and that's why my choice of campus was based on how big the library was.

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:58:29](#)):

Yes.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:58:30](#)):

And that was the internet. That was the internet in those days. Because if you want information that's where you

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:58:35](#)):

Yeah, but it was a reliable internet. Well, first of all, you couldn't pick up anything more serious than a head cold in the library. Now you can get a virus on your computer by going on the internet. But also, the other thing is, the great frustration with libraries is there's never time to read every book. And there's so much wisdom in there. There's so much. Think about all the great minds that have ever existed are under one roof. And that always fascinated me, the great thinking of the world, the story of our civilization under one roof. And if you ever want to read just for Fun, a beautifully written book that is also in some ways a little tragic. It's called the Library Book, and it's a history of a library that suffered a terrible fire, a library in California that I believe turned,

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:59:38](#)):

Who's the author?

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:59:39](#)):

My goodness. This was the book I got as a gift. I should know. You know what I cannot find.

Eric 4Z1UG ([00:59:45](#)):

You could find it and send it to me. And I'll put it as a reference in here,

Caryn KD2GUT ([00:59:49](#)):

Eric. I did find it. I did find it. Susan or Susan Orlean is the author, O-R-L-E-A-N, and it's about the catastrophic fire that struck the Los Angeles Central Library. She does an amazing job because it's not just about the library. You have to read the book to understand, but it goes very, she goes very deep. She has a beautiful, elegant writing style. I think you'll enjoy it.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:01:17](#)):

For the listeners who are saying, this isn't a podcast about amateur radio, one of the reasons that we're kind of on this track, Caryn gave an amazing interview for Ham Radio Workbench podcast. By the time this comes out, about a month or two ago, all of the ham radio discussion was mostly there, and it was very complete from what I listened to. So this is kind of why at the beginning of our conversation, we decided that we would go kind

of off in a different direction, and I'm loving the direction that we're going in, and I hope that the listeners are as well. So now that we're talking about amateur radio Newsline, was there a story that you felt was the most important story so far that you've covered on Newsline and can you mention what that is?

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:02:08](#)):

Oh boy. The most important story.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:02:12](#)):

Can you classify stories like that?

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:02:15](#)):

Don't know. I can classify them by category. I think Eric, because in eight or nine, going on nine years of doing this. Well, yes. I will say Bill Pasternak's death was a big one. Bill Pasternak, being a co-founder of Amateur Radio Newsline. And the reason I ended up being part of Newsline with his passing, I mean, the man was a giant, and when he died, the newscast shut down for many, many weeks and everybody wondered what was going to happen. And I had just been brought on board presumably to assist him because he was in bad health. So I think the most important story from a personal viewpoint is Bill Pastor's death. It changed everything for everybody involved in Newsline and for anybody who knew Bill, and a lot of people apparently really knew Bill and loved, I'm sorry, I never got to know him. Two New Yorkers who never met,

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:03:37](#)):

Although Bill was in Los Angeles for many, many years, and I think George mentioned it as well, but any of us that grew up there remembered when he started Westlink, where he was playing the news out over the repeaters.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:03:53](#)):

That's right.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:03:53](#)):

In Los Angeles. And then apparently, I guess he was duplicating his efforts on cassette tapes.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:03:59](#)):

Yes.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:04:00](#)):

And sending those all over the place so that those could be played almost nationwide. So interesting thing I had read that the Iranian revolution, where the Shah of Iran was

deposed during the card administration, apparently the Ayatollah Khomeini in Paris had actually did the same thing, and that all of his speeches were sent into Iran on cassette tapes. So pre-Internet, and people were duplicating tapes and they would take a duplicated tape, make duplicates, and maybe by the time you got your tape, it was unintelligible, but still intelligible.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:04:40](#)):

Yeah,

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:04:40](#)):

It was an amazing thing. And that's what I do remember about him. I was about to interview Bill before he passed away, and there's a few people like that that I've missed that opportunity, but I had looked so forward to interviewing Bill. So that was something that was very personal to you, even though you hadn't met him, you potentially were kind of following in the footsteps of an organization that he had created over 30 years, 40 years,

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:05:07](#)):

Years? Yeah. It was difficult for me because first of all, I was a ham maybe a year, and very new to something I was still having to learn a lot about. And here I was being told, okay, we need a newscast. It's like, yeah, but I just got here, folks. I just got here. I just got on the air. What do I do? And we did our best for a couple of weeks. We have a great team, so we were able to pull it off because everybody worked together to salvage it. I hear about him constantly, and I really enjoy that because it's my only way I'll ever get to know him. What I like Eric, is that I'm seeing in your shack there, your license plates hanging on your wall, which I remarked about earlier. And I have on the wall in my shack, a license plate. Actually the same, of course, it's a California license plate. It would be the same color, and it says WA6ITF. It's, it's a very weathered license plate. A little banged up, mounted on a block of wood. It looks beautiful. I had it put on a block of wood. It's hanging on the wall. This was sent in the mail to me about two or three years ago, quite unexpectedly, with a familiar return address from Pic, Mississippi. That being Don Wilbanks, AE5DW, he has the other license plate.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:06:55](#)):

It depends. Do you have stickers on your license plate or do you have no stickers on your license plate?

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:06:59](#)):

No stickers. No stickers.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:07:02](#)):

So that was the front license plate?

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:07:05](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Bill. Bill, Pasternak's license plate. Don had had both

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:07:10](#)):

Black and yellow or blue and yellow.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:07:13](#)):

Oh, no. It's blue and yellow. Like yours. Like yours. And yeah,

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:07:19](#)):

Because the plates 10 years before were black and yellow.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:07:24](#)):

Okay. That's a lot. Like New York had that too. I think. New York,

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:07:29](#)):

You could tell the age of the plates. That would've been really something. Look, it is really something that you guys have his license plates, but

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:07:37](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. When I called Don, I actually got very choked up and he said, no, this belongs to you. This belongs to you now. And he has one in his shack. And he said, this was on Bill's truck. This was his license plate. And he said, it needs to be with you in New York now.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:08:04](#)):

Probably some bugs still on it, right when you got it.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:08:07](#)):

Oh yeah. I scraped them off. I mean, scrape 'em off and just put 'em in the garbage, send them back to the earth.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:08:16](#)):

The rear plates have the stickers in the upper corners, and the front plates have the bugs.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:08:21](#)):

Yeah. Well, of course the bugs. Well, he knows I'm an animal lover. I've got the horse. I feed the squirrels. I've got the prairie dogs, and of course our little dogs that we've had here. So bugs are a welcome dead ones especially.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:08:40](#)):

Do you have a story that you would think has been maybe the most interesting story that you've covered on amateur radio? Newsline? Maybe one that required more research, but the gold that came out of the digging was well worth it.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:08:57](#)):

That's a tough one. That's a tough one. I don't know whether it would be something in technology. I tend to favor the stories that I really show human connection. The lost QSL card that comes around uniting three generations or the hams. We have a very active group that we cover every now and again in India where they reunite missing members of the family, which unfortunately happens a lot in India. People go missing. We had this same group. This story did fascinate me, this is the West Bengal Radio Club. They were able to intercept an effort to sell one woman into human trafficking ring, and they actually were able to locate her using amateur radio and hams in the area.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:10:12](#)):

Really? How interesting.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:10:14](#)):

Yeah, and this is I think about a year ago, and they were able to alert the police who got her out of the house and got the individuals who were holding her. She had been tricked into going with some presumed friends who had lured her for a price and she was going to be sold and she was transported by train to the next town over.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:10:43](#)):

This is in India?

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:10:45](#)):

This is in India. This club goes above and beyond. This club is a bunch of hams who also sometimes function as a social service agency. They do a lot of intervention and a lot of family reunions. They're well connected throughout India, actually throughout a lot of Southeast Asia. They're amazing what they do on a shoestring budget, and I think what I like about our coverage of this group is that it shows the potential of amateur radio. Yes, you can communicate over the internet, you can communicate over WhatsApp, you can communicate over any of these social platforms. You can use Zoom, you can still pick up the telephone too. I mean, that's still there.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:11:42](#)):

Radio is part of Nature. Radio existed before we were on this Planet. Radio will be here after we are gone. By using the powers of this medium, the strengths we're able to do incredible things like talk to one another like rescue people, like find folks who are missing, make connections during earthquakes, during wars, during storms, all because of radio. The internet is fragile. The internet is vulnerable. I mean, yeah, radio. Okay. We

have sunspots, we have our issues. A lot of us are cursing cycle 25 right now. It hasn't been very well behaved on some days, but radio is there. It will always be there. I think the fact that people can accomplish things person to person via radio is miraculous. It's why I love radio. I never went into TV. I never after briefly thinking that's where I wanted to work because radio tickles the imagination. I don't know if you're familiar with Stan Freeberg?

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:13:06](#)):

Oh, sure. Absolutely.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:13:08](#)):

Okay. Then you know the spot he did for the old radio advertising bureau where he was trying to sell the attraction of radio and basically described the giant ice cream sundae that he had created with the helicopter flying overhead and dropping the cherry on it and the whipped cream and everything. He's trying to convince advertisers that radio has more power in the images it can create in doing that, and that has always stayed with me. That's a classic. The theater of the mind is also the theater of the best and most efficient communication, and I think as hams we tap into that.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:13:52](#)):

As a kid, I enjoyed radio much more than I enjoyed television, probably for that same reason and just say, I enjoy reading the same way your brain has to conjure up the images that are being described.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:14:08](#)):

Exactly. That everybody is talking about now, and we wrote about it on Newsline is the Netflix miniseries All the light we cannot see.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:14:21](#)):

Right. I just saw that the book's much better.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:14:24](#)):

Thank you. I was just about to say, if you have read the book, you may not want to even finish the series. If you haven't read the book and you're not a reader, the series is fine. I read the book, fell in love with it, and only got through two episodes of the series because what's the point? I know what everybody looks like. I read the book. I have the pictures in my head.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:14:50](#)):

It was entertaining. If you weren't being a purist, you're right. If you're a purist and you read the book, then you're doing a lot of comparing. My wife said the same thing. I did enjoy the book.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:15:02](#)):

Yeah.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:15:03](#)):

I can say I read it probably two years ago and so therefore I didn't remember all of the details, but I agree with you. There are times when you can't really make a book into a great movie.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:15:14](#)):

No, no. And movies. I think movies by virtue of the fact that they must be entertaining and have a box office and a commercial appeal like newspapers, like we said earlier, they're going to be vulnerable to the market and there's always going to be an element of even subtle sales pitch in there that will attract people.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:15:43](#)):

I think that the movie industry was always commercial based just because of the cost of creating a movie, whether it was done on a sound stage in the twenties and thirties or whether it was done in Italy or Spain in the sixties. These were very expensive operations and so therefore they were very commercially based, but I think that newspapers, well, I guess they had to sell advertising subscriptions in advertising was the media, and maybe there was some kind of like the television news from the fifties through the seventies, maybe their broadcast license prevented them from being too commercially influenced.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:16:20](#)):

You had the fairness doctrine, which does not. I don't think that's in play anymore. You basically had to present exactly the same amount of airtime to opposing views, and that does not in the United States that I don't know what happened to the fairness doctrine, but I remember that was very important. You could not compromise your license by using it as an agent of one side or the other.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:16:51](#)):

I think the United States is the only country in the world now that allows drug advertising.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:16:57](#)):

I love that may cause death. It's like, okay,

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:17:01](#)):

When I visit my father in America, I see these commercials are what, two, three minutes long and it seems to drive the whole machine, so it's kind of like we're way off the topic. Let me ask you, what excites you the most about what is happening in amateur radio now?

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:17:17](#)):

Okay, I'm going to go for what is, most people who know me are going to know exactly what I'm going to say. It's the resurgence in cw. It's the rebirth and the rediscovery of cw, and I know everybody loves digital and everybody's into the next great digital thing, but CW invites you to use your brain. CW requires that you learn. CW requires discipline, and ultimately if you get to a point where you can use it to communicate with others, and I don't mean a quick exchange, I mean a rag chew, even a rack Jew of 15 or 20 minutes, you connect with people, you connect with somebody else who shares your commitment to learning a code, who shares your commitment to communicating a little differently, and I think it's a wonderful thing to watch. You go back to my 12-year-old self learning CW to get my novice, that desire stayed with me over the years I was given when I got my license, a gift from one of the club members, an old J 38 key because I walked around saying, yeah, now that I got my license, I'm going to learn CW again or finish learning cw, and I never did, and every year it was, oh, yeah, yeah, I'm going to get around.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:19:00](#)):

I'm going to get around to doing that. I'm going to learn CW and well, somebody called my bluff. I had to learn cw and I'm so grateful and I am seeing it's like two big doors being pushed open and suddenly I'm standing at the end of this really, really long hallway and it's lined with people on both sides and they're all CW ops and it's like the world. This opens the door to a world of people who are curious enough to want to communicate meaningfully in another way, and the Q says, I've had with people CW and some of them are all time military guys, and some of them are newer ops. You go to their page on QRZ.com and they all say the same thing. They say, I don't want justice a signal report from you and your QTH. I want to get to know you, and yes, that can be done in sideband, but in code it's different. It's just people are really into this.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:20:23](#)):

I find that so interesting. I find that so interesting from the standpoint that you would think that cw, that people would just want to exchange RST. Here is RST, QTH is but the rag chewing side. Well, that's very interesting and perhaps there's, with all of the connection, electronic connection that we carry in our pockets, that truly is miraculous, on the one hand and with all the social media that everyone uses, which is maybe it's now beyond something new that there's a lot of people that really want sincere social relationships that are not social media relationships. The thing they're carrying in their pocket is not doing it. It's not making them feel part of a community. It's maybe even making them feel isolated, and so what you're saying is quite interesting that perhaps even CW because of its requirement for a little bit more, the gate is a little bit higher. It maybe creates a higher quality community. What do you think about that?

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:21:29](#)):

I agree. I think rather than higher quality, I would say a different, very different community in that you share immediate, you immediately share a bond of commitment to the code. People don't always care if you're fast or slow, just that you be copyable. The courtesy extended to other ops for the most part is tremendous. They will slow down for you. They will critique you if you want. They will have patience. What I have learned from cw, I cannot tell you, here's what it teaches you. It teaches you to accept your mistakes and learn from them. It teaches you patience with yourself. It teaches you patience with others. You cannot learn CW without messing up big time. Oh God, we all bust our own call sign. How humiliating, right? Yeah, right, but laugh at it. It's funny. I mean, it really is. I'm like, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:22:55](#)):

I went on, I did a QSO the other day. I messed up my call sign five times. What a dork, and I laugh about it because it's okay. Don't take yourself so seriously that you can't have fun. We're doing this for fun, presumably I say to people, you're getting too tightly wrapped. You're not having fun. You got to have fun or turn off the rig. This is not a JOB. We've all had jobs. This is amateur radio, and I think CW puts the fun back into it. For those of us who are like myself recovering perfectionists, this is a wonderful, wonderful way to ease up on yourself, to learn something new, to communicate with people who shared the same struggle, who understand it, who appreciate you simply for showing up. CW ops are out there looking for a rag Jew and will have patience with you and learn about you and the follow-up emails are outstanding. By the time you get a follow-up email to your rag Jew, you guys are already old friends people. It is easier to, I mean, yes, I do. I check into nets. I belong to a couple of nets, so I haven't given up on sideband and I won't say, oh yeah, I tuck my microphone away and I'm never going to use it again because I love using sideband, but there is a quality to CW up that it's a secret handshake. There you go. It's the secret handshake. It's like, you're one of us. Okay, let's have a QSO and it's magic.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:24:59](#)):

Well, your advice then be to new or returning hams.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:25:03](#)):

If you don't think you can do cw, try it anyway because you may surprise yourself if you don't like it, at least you tried it, but don't close the door because if I'm perfectly honest, I will say this to you when I walked around saying, oh, yeah, yeah, I started to learn CW when I was 12 and now I'm going to learn it again. Okay, brutal honesty here. I really, I said that I did not have a burning desire. I just said it because it sounded good. I mean, maybe I would do it, but maybe I wouldn't, but maybe I would, but maybe I wouldn't. Okay, but then I got the J 38 as a gift, and I've said this a number of times. Then a year or two later, my brother sent me a beautiful Vibroplex key and I was just doing signal reports in QTH, basically the quick, and I said, my God, I've been given gifts and you don't let gifts gather dust. You use them. Gifts are given for a reason.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:26:27](#)):

Celebrate the fact that you have this and put it to good use. It's important, respect it, and so my journey began and wow, this is the best, the best. I've never enjoyed ham radio so much as now, okay, Eric, I'm coming on my 10th year. I got back into it late after my life, my horseback riding all of that 10 years in 2024, these last couple of years doing CW have been explosive. It's been wonderful. New hams, cry it. Please try cw. It'll tickle your brain. It'll make you feel good, and if you were a returning ham or a ham who's been curious about it but not curious enough about it, get a little more curious cry. It won't bite you. It won't bite you, I promise.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:27:34](#)):

And the resources for learning CW now are light years ahead of where they were in the olden days.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:27:43](#)):

You don't have to join the Navy, right?

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:27:47](#)):

Right. You have the Long Island CW Club and you have CW ops. Both of their learning systems are like unbelievable, unbelievably good.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:27:56](#)):

I have connected, I have also connected, and I came into this through LICWC. I've made amazing friends, in fact, LICWC, I blessed them a thousand times. They were my gateway to doing POTA,, and I've made some outstanding friendships. These people are like family to me. My greatest progress has been made with CW Innovations. These are just amazing friends. We are a tight group of, I've become a coach with them now, and what this does is it takes people who already know CW and gets you on a more proficient level. It was only with them that I have learned, oh my God, how can this be? I'm doing a head copy. How did that happen? What did that happen? How do people do that? And I'm doing it and I'm ran chewing. Okay. I may not have racing stripes on my key, but who caress? I'm getting the message through. I'm having fun. That's okay. This is not a race. We are communicating. People. We're communicating. That's why we're on the radio and CW Innovations taught me that, and best of all, and this is the biggie for me, I made peace with the fact that yes, indeed you can make mistakes and survive. That's a big one. That's a real big one because people are afraid.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:29:35](#)):

Yes, that's true. Because people are afraid of looking foolish in front of other people.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:29:40](#)):

Yes,

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:29:42](#)):

So you're kind of telling them that it's okay. Everybody's been there.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:29:47](#)):

Oh, absolutely. And we're all fine with that, and we all smile. Nobody laughs. I went back to horseback riding as an adult and I have the most wonderful horse in the world. He's a unicorn actually. But the friend that I ride with or have ridden with in the past, he got into riding in his, I want to say forties or fifties, and he's a guy, so an older man in riding breaches is kind of unusual, especially he's an electrical contractor, so he's a tradesman, so strutting around in your breaches is bound to attract attention. But he said to me, and he's a very wise man, he said to me, it's really hard to learn to ride when you're a grownup, and this is true of anything, substitute, whatever it is, ham radio, cw, but I'll say riding because I'm quoting my friend. He says, you have to be willing to look stupid in front of other people. You have to be willing to fail in front of other people. You have to be willing to make mistakes in front of other people, and as grownups, we don't like that because we figure by now we should know everything and he's right. Yeah. Right.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:31:03](#)):

Yes, that's very true. Caryn, this has been for me over the top. I knew that we would have to go in a different direction because Radio Workbench did it so well with you when they interviewed you last, so I hope that the people will go to do both, and I'll put the link in to the show notes for the episode of the Ham Radio Workbench where you were at, so that they'll listen to that and they'll listen to this, and then they'll know Caryn Eve Murray, KD2GUT, much better than they did before. With that, I want to thank you so much and wish you 73.

Caryn KD2GUT ([01:31:39](#)):

Thank you, Eric. 73 for now.

Eric 4Z1UG ([01:31:42](#)):

That concludes this episode of QSO Today. I hope that you enjoyed this QSO with Caryn. Please be sure to check out the show notes that include links and information about the topics that we discussed. Go to www.qsotoday.com and put in KD2GUT in the search box at the top of the page. You may notice that some of the episodes are transcribed into written text. If you'd like to sponsor this or any of the episodes into written text, please contact me. Support the QSO Today podcast by first joining the QSO Today email list by pressing on the subscribe buttons on the show notes page. I will not spam you or share your email address with anyone. Become a listener sponsor monthly or annually by clicking on the sponsor buttons on the show notes pages. Your value for value support is recognized on the QSO Today podcast and in the weekly show notes, use our Amazon link

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Until next time, this is Eric 4Z1UG. 73.

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