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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

May 2002

Website: <http://www.wtsn.binghamton.edu/bara>

President's Corner

THE HAMFEST: I had a great time at our Hamfest and I made my usual purchase from Gene of KJI who had a large assortment of new hamgear at his table. I am getting the Yaesu QRP HF rig and I hope to do some hilltopping in the summer with it. Judging by the crowd around the KJI table a lot of other hams were upgrading equipment or buying equipment for the first time. Judging by the crowds at the other tables and looking at the number of books (from QRP Books) that people were carrying around, our vendors were meeting the needs of our ham community.

Many thanks to Bill Coleman, N2BC, who did an excellent job of managing our Hamfest. Bill and his staff put in hundreds of hours of work preparing for and running the Hamfest. Special thanks to the cleanup crew who made sure that the Fairgrounds were clean when we left.

OUR FOOD VENDER, THE 4H: Hedy Clothier, AA2MU, made arrangements with the Tioga 4H to be our food vendor. There was plenty of food for everyone, and the prices were low! Two Danish and a coffee for \$1.50, you certainly can't beat that!

STUFF I SAW FOR SALE IN THE FLEAMARKET: If you were in the market for a two-meter HT, there were some almost new ones selling for around \$100. There was an Alpha 76 linear for \$1,000; several Ten-Tec Omni D's in the \$400 range (a highly regarded rig); TX-820's; TS-830's; TS-440 (\$400, great HF rig); IC-746 (\$900); and lots of "little stuff" — parts, headsets, computer boards, power supplies; you name it, it was probably there.

We had a terrific turn-out of club members helping out with the hamfest "doings" — I hope this list is complete; apologies if I missed anybody: John, N2YZI; Paul, N2NCB; Al, WB2FBT; Ed,

Thanks to Mel, KB2FLU, and Don, KB3COS, who donated equipment to be sold at the Hamfest. The equipment was sold quickly, and the club's treasury has increased!

TESTING AND NEW LICENSEES: Ham testing offers the opportunity to get a license fast and it is a big draw for our Hamfest. I met one new ham who is now anxiously waiting his call sign assignment, KC2IKA's brother Rhett., joined the club right after passing his test. Welcome Rhett and welcome to all who passed their test at the exam sessions.

UP AT THE SHACK: Lots of news about the shack on the hill, so much in fact that I'll leave it for another time. *[Actually, your editor saved a lot for next time.]*

CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING: If you look at names of the committee chairmen, board members, and officers of the club over the past 10 years or so, you will see the same names occurring year after year. What this means is that a small, dedicated, core of members is keeping our club going. We need to expand our leadership core with new people. Please consider taking an active part in running our club, we really do need your help. If you are up to the challenge, please come to the next board meeting.

2002 Hamfest a Success!

The Hamfest is over — it was great! Friday setup was a bit on the chilly side with 30 degree temperatures and 200 MPH winds, but it was worth it. Saturday was beautiful — sunny and 65 degree temperatures - as the over 500 attendees will attest.

KB2SCF; Paul, K2ABX; Mel, WE2K; Howard, K2HK; Ford, AB2HS; Bob, K2FU; Bob, WS2U; Don, N2NON; Victor, N2LZM; Ron, N2RWK; Rick, N3VKM; Joe, KB2AVB; Jerry, KG2FY; Hedy,

AA2MU; Ron, AA2EQ; Bill, WB8RAE; Bob, WA2VCS; Bob, KC2DSS; Curt, N2NFS; Jerry, KA2WQR; Duane, K2DLT; Elf, N2OK; Dan, N2WSQ

The Tioga County 4-H ran the food concession and they did a great job — we had lots of positive comments about the food and the food prices.

My thanks to the Hamfest core organizing team: N2NCB, AA2MU, and WS2U — they made it an easy task this year. As always the true driving force is Paul, N2NCB. In addition to being the "money man", Paul does an incredible amount of legwork to get commitments for the facilities, our insurance, keys, and on and on.

Mark your calendars for May 3, 2003 and let's do it again! — 73, Bill N2BC

Emergency Communications Are U Ready?

If a disaster situation developed and all normal communications were disrupted are you able and willing to provide timely and effective communication services for your community at a local level, at a regional level, at a state level — independent of commercial power and pre-installed antennas?

It may be easy for some of us to answer, "I can do that." But can we really? Look out, that question above is loaded with key words such as: *able, willing, timely, effective, communications, local, regional, and state*. When was the last time you demonstrated, even to yourself, that you can "do that," or at least some of "that?" When was the last time you or I practiced for such an event?

Do you think our HAM cousins in the area around Anaheim, CA, or La Plata, MD had a different attitude toward emergency preparedness? They certainly did in California. There they were ready to practice a mass casualty drill when the "This is not a Drill" event occurred: A freight train and a heavily occupied commuter train collided resulting in death and many injuries. ARES team members were immediately deployed to key locations and to area hospitals. The Orange County HAMS provided excellent service.

Does anyone recall the last time ARES or RACES participated in a local mass casualty drill? A hint: Take a look at the hospital roofs, you may still spot the remnants of the then popular "halo" antennas.

Does anyone recall the last time area hams packed up gear and moved to unfamiliar locations and provided long range communications to and from the triple cities? Who would those people be today? Are those types of people around today? Are those people *able* and *willing*? Are they trained to provide *timely, effective* communications? I really don't think so. Why? Because there haven't been periodic emergency communication training nets, meaningful participation at Field Days, participation in a Simulated Emergency Test, or unscheduled Emergency Communication Drills of any substance for years.

Do we really think that we can be accomplished performers if we haven't practiced the skills we will need?

There is an upcoming opportunity to "play" emergency communicator. Field Days — the last full weekend in June (June 22-23) — is an opportunity to hone those rusty skills. A lot of time remains to locate or construct those antennas and feedlines. (Oh, by the way, if you happen to locate a 160 meter folded dipole antenna, give Bill, WB8RAE, a call, he misplaced his a few years ago.)

Alternate power? Well, if the HF rig is 12 volts the car battery may be the way to go, but how do you avoid depleting the car battery to the point that it won't start the car? No trees to anchor those HF antennas -- now what? — how do you get those antennas up? How do you take them down? Do you really need a ground rod? Does the generator work? How do you safely transport fuel? What do you do for the hungries? These are just a few of the many questions that could be answered, ***if you participate.*** -- CU on the radio. DE Jack, WB2GHH

Quality Hand Soldering and Circuit Board Repair

Soldering is a simple enough operation and it is not *too* difficult to make a passable connection in antenna work or when working with connectors, but modern circuit boards are quite dense and surface mount technology offers special challenges. In a bit over a hundred pages H. Ted Smith takes you where many fear to tread by outlining the basics of hand soldering from through-the-hole to surface mount with emphasis on proper technique and the importance of correct forming of leads and tinning. It's obvious that Mr. Smith speaks from long experience at the bench and his background in prototyping and repair makes the sections on repairing and reworking boards especially useful. If you have ever

wanted to take your soldering skills beyond the basic level or if you just want to learn how the professionals do it then this book is well worth its \$10.00 cover price. In

Quality Hand Soldering and Circuit Board Repair (ISBN 0-8273-6347-8) by H. Ted Smith is published by Delmar and is available through QRP Books and other outlets.

License Renewal

The ARRL will process members' license renewals, address changes: ARRL members daunted by the FCC's Universal Licensing System can ask Headquarters to file their license renewal or change-of-address applications free of charge. ARRL members wishing to take advantage of this service should download Form NCVEC 605 (that's the form used by volunteer exam coordinators) from the ARRL Web site, print it, fill it in and mail it to ARRL VEC, 225 Main St, Newington CT 06111.

The response of those wanting ARRL to process renewals has been very positive. For the first three months of 2002, ARRL handled 1721 applications for members--up from 514 for the same period in 2001. The ARRL VEC staff now can process any member's FCC license application request, except for a vanity call sign application. Remember: Renewal applications may only be filed within 90 days of your license expiration date.

The Form 605 application can be downloaded from <<<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/ncvec605-3.pdf>>>; the FCC Web Site is <<<http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/>>>. — *From the ARRL Letter of 26 April 2002.*

Equipment Donation

Among other items of interest at the May Meeting of the BARA Board was the announcement by George, K2CM, that he will be making an extended loan of an Icom IC706 to the club for use in the third Operating Room. As soon as George has a Power Supply for the radio it will be installed and BARA will have permanent Operating Positions in all three rooms. If you have been waiting for a chance to work with this exciting radio which covers the HF bands plus Six and Two Meters you might want to stop by when the position is ready and give it a try.

Many thanks to George for this generous loan.

Thor Heyerdahl Dies at 87

Noted Norwegian explorer and ethnologist Thor Heyerdahl died April 18. He was 87. This might seem odd news for an Amateur Radio Newsletter, but in 1947, Amateur Radio played a critical role in the success and safety of Heyerdahl's 101-day Kon-Tiki raft expedition, which used the call

fact, the original edition (published at over \$30.00) was a bargain as well.

sign LI2B on the amateur bands. Heyerdahl was attempting to prove that it was possible for South American tribes to have crossed the Pacific from east to west to settle the Polynesian islands.

Two former World War II Norwegian underground radio operators, Kurt Haugland, LA3KY, and Torstein Raaby, operated LI2B aboard the Kon-Tiki using tube gear powered mostly by dry batteries. LI2B kept a schedule with W1AW and other US stations during the historic voyage.

Details on the voyage of Kon-Tiki — Heyerdahl's raft — were written up in *QST* and other publications of the era. The National receiver and other radio equipment survived soaking and shipwreck to maintain effective and reliable communications under extremely averse conditions.

It's worth noting that many other scientific and cultural expeditions of the twentieth century also kept regular schedules with Amateur Operators to relay news of their progress and that the news stories and headlines generated by this activity provided valuable publicity for our hobby in the eyes of the general public. — *Based on an article in the ARRL Letter of 26 April 2002.*

Program for May

Bob, KC2DSS, promises that the Program for May will be on Emergency Power with an unconventional twist. He won't offer any specifics at the moment so anything from portable nuclear reactors to hamster wheels is possible, but Bob always puts together a good program and we can expect this one to be a winner.

Fun in the Sun

Mark your calendars for July and August because we plan to hold the BARA General Meetings for those months up at the Club Shack.

In July we will meet for a Clean-Up and Yard Work session and in August we hold the Club Picnic. Both of these sessions will start well in advance of the usual 7:30 meeting time and there should be plenty of time for socializing and operating as well. Look for details in future Newsletters, but do plan to join us in the shade on the hill!

Operating and Other Events

15 MAY: BARA GENERAL MEETING.

31 MAY - 2 JUNE: ROCHESTER HAMFEST (ARRL Atlantic Division Convention) in Henrietta, NY — Rochester ARA.

5 JUNE: BARA BOARD MEETING.

8 JUNE: BLOOMSBURG HAMFEST (ARRL Eastern Pennsylvania Section Convention in Bloomsburg, PA — Columbia/Montour ARC.

12 JUNE: SVARA MEETING, 7:30 PM. Office of Emergency Services.

15 JUNE: CORTLAND HAMFEST in Cortland, NY — Skyline ARC.