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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

April 2002

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

President's Corner

The May Hamfest should be a lot of fun. We will have various vendors there, good food, door prizes, license testing, etc. If you want to buy a new rig, this is the time and place. Gene of KJI will be there will a large assortment of new equipment for VHU, UHF, and the Low Bands including rigs, commercial antennas and various accessories. We will also have parts vendors with those elusive connectors and adapters that you just can't find locally.

The Hamfest is also a great place to meet the hams that you have been talking to on local repeaters and nets for the last year. Set up an eyeball schedule to renew acquaintances and meet your friends at the Hamfest.

Upgrading Your License: It seems as if every time I listen to the local repeaters I hear a new call! Ham radio is growing in Binghamton!

Most new hams seem to operate mostly on the VHF repeaters, perhaps because they have a Technician license for VHF and above. If you only operate repeaters, you are missing a thrilling aspect of ham radio: low band operation.

Low band operation is defined as operation below 6-Meters (50 MHz). These bands provide world wide communications capability. On a regular basis you can talk to stations on all continents as well as stations throughout the 50 states. SSB, CW, and the digital modes are all popular. If you have never operated the low bands, you cannot imagine the thrill of talking to a station thousands of miles away.

I can still remember my first contact with a

The BARA Program for April will be Skywarn Training. The National Weather Service Office from the Binghamton Regional Airport will present the program which is always interesting and ever informative. Be

station in Europe. I called CQ on 20-Meter CW using a homebrew 20 watt transmitter. A station in England came back to me. My palms were sweaty and my heart was beating rapidly. I was 15 years old at the time and in high school. That QSO was all I could talk about for weeks! I remember hearing about the DXCC award -- an award for getting QSL cards from 100 DX entities (countries, islands, etc.). Although I thought that it would be impossible for me to ever get that award in my lifetime I now have about 115 cards from places all over the world — all while running 5 watts or less (QRP operation).

With a little work anyone can upgrade to General or even Extra and operate on the low bands. A code speed of 5 WPM is really not that difficult to attain and the written test is not too bad either. Consider upgrading your license and get in on the real fun of ham radio. *DE George, K2CM*

Passing of a Friend

It is with regret that we report the passing of Mrs. Kathryn M. Milks on 22 March of this year. Mrs Milks was born on 23 June 1912 and she and her Husband Harley had been good friends and understanding landlords of the Club for many years.

Although Mrs. Milks had not been able to get around much in the last few years, many of our older members will remember her visits with Harley and the homemade cookies that cheered and nourished the participants in many a BARA Field Day on the hilltop.

BARA extends sympathy to the Milks family and gratitude for their friendship over the years.

Skywarn Training

there at 7:30 PM sharp and please consider inviting Ham and non-Ham friends along because while you do not need an Amateur Radio License to be a Skywarn Spotter, this activity is one of our most visible Emergency Service

activities as Amateur Operators. Let's not forget either that the National Weather Service went on record to support Amateur Radio and especially our 2-Meter frequencies during the "Little LEO" threat; participating in Skywarn is a way we can thank them and it is also a way of demonstrating to the general public some of the very positive aspects of Amateur Radio.

Answering the Call

Sometimes a call comes over the airwaves for assistance — an accident, an emergency, whatever — help is needed and an Amateur is on the scene. If you heard the call, would you be ready? Do you know what to do, who to call? It might not be a bad idea to take a few moments to think about it now so that if the Call comes you will be ready.

First, and most important, write down the details. Don't trust your memory and don't assume that you can just call the Ham back. Batteries die, propagation changes, and he or she might not be there when you call back. Get the details up front and write them down.

What is the emergency? How many people are involved? Is there immediate danger to life or property? Where is the event happening? These are the details that emergency services will need and perhaps the most important bit of information is "Where". **Get as specific a location as possible:** landmarks, mileposts, highway exits, directions. All of these details will assist Emergency Services in responding and the more specific you can be the quicker they can respond. If you are dealing with a highway accident you may not know the area and the person who called you may not either. In such cases Exits and Mileposts and the lane where the accident happened will be critical pieces of information.

Who to Call? The ideal is for you to contact Emergency Services for the area where the event is taking place, but if you don't have the phone number for a specific police/fire department then call 911. In any event, be prepared to provide full details and begin by identifying yourself and explaining that this is an emergency call that was relayed to you by amateur radio.

You must be sure that the dispatcher you are speaking with understands that you do not want a response at your location. If the dispatcher requests you contact another service, be cooperative, get the number, and write it down. Emergency Services are not always set up to readily handle a call outside their

geographic jurisdiction and it may be more efficient for them to ask you to call another service.

Finally, close with the person who called you. Call back on frequency and relay details of how/when Emergency Services will respond. If possible, stay on frequency to monitor in the event that the situation changes or additional contact is needed.

Preparation beforehand makes the job easier. Gather phone numbers now and keep a notebook and map in the shack, just in case.

Club Dues

Please take a moment to check the Mailing Label on your Newsletter. Just to the right of your name you will see the Month/Year when your BARA membership comes up for renewal. If you are due for dues, please take a moment to drop a check for \$18 (individual) or \$27 (family) in the mail — even better, stop by the next meeting to say "hello" and to see what is happening!

New Tone on SVARA Repeaters

The Subaddible Tones (PL, CTSS) have been changed for the 146.820, 146.865, and 444.1 Repeaters. The new Tone (146.2 Hz) is NOT required for Transmit; it only affects users with Tone Squelch Decode on their receivers.

The Tone was changed to add an additional amount of rejection of interference from paging, automotive electronics, out-of-town repeaters, and other sources. Please note that this decode tone is different from the 100.0 Hz tone used on other local machines.

These Repeaters are owned and maintained by the Susquehanna Valley Amateur Repeater Association (SVARA). Jerry Smith, WA2QEL, is the Trustee. Coverage for 146.82 is approximately 40 miles, an area which roughly includes Courtland, Chemung, Gibson, PA, Deposit, and Afton. The 146.865 machine covers the hilltops and Northern Broome County. All of these Repeaters are open for general use and are also used for Skywarn, RACES, ARES, and Public Service activities.

SVARA Dues are \$12 per year with additional support coming from the annual Coffee Break at the Whitney Point Rest Stop over the Labor Day weekend.

Please contact Ford Drake on 146.82 or 146.865 for more information. *DE Ford Drake, AB2HS*

The 2002 BARA Hamfest

On 4 May the BARA Hamfest will take place at the Marvin Park Fairgrounds in Owego (Route 17C across from Topps Market). This is the opening shot of the Spring/Summer Hamfest Season in our corner of paradise and it's a lot of fun for all with plenty of bargains and horse trading throughout the day.

This event is our Club Moneymaker and the profits fund BARA activities and equipment purchases and keep the dues down. It's fun, but it's work and there is still plenty of room for helpers. Just a couple hours of your time will make the job easier for everyone.

Setup will be Friday, 3 May, and will begin around Noon/1:00 PM. We spend a few hours sweeping the building (bring your own broom), moving tables, and getting ready for a smooth opening the next day.

The day of the Hamfest we need help with Ticket Sales, Parking, Directing Vendors, Talk-In, etc. No muscle work, but the early birds get to 'scope out the deals before anyone else. Lots of fun and we ask for an hour or so of your time. Shifts begin real early (5:30 AM or so) and continue through the day.

Cleanup begins as the Hamfest winds down (around 1:00 PM or so). We clean up the building and police the area for litter and goodies — finders keepers — and we should be done by 3:00 PM.

Sounds like work, but it's lots of fun. Some of us have been doing this for years and we actually look forward to it! Give Bill, N2BC, a call at 748-5232 or e-mail him (n2bc@stny.rr.com) to volunteer. There will also be sign-up sheets at the April BARA meeting.

DXCC Card Checking

Mel, WE2K, is looking into getting BARA certified for DXCC Card Checking. This would involve having several members of BARA certified as Field Checkers and it would make it easier for Amateurs applying for DXCC and certain Awards to have their QSL Cards verified.

In the absence of a Field Checking Team it is necessary for DXCC applicants to get their QSL Cards to ARRL Headquarters, a Hamfest, or a Club where Card Checking will take place. This can be inconvenient and a BARA Team would benefit both the Club and area Amateurs.

Thanks to Mel for looking into this. We look forward to reporting additional details as they become available.

DXCC to Accept P5/4L4FN Contacts for Credit

To great sighs of relief from the DX community, the ARRL has announced that it will accept SSB contacts with P5/4L4FN in North Korea for DXCC credit. Operator Ed Giorgadze of the Republic of Georgia, has been active from the capital city of Pyongyang since early last November. Valid SSB contacts from the onset of the P5/4L4FN operation last fall now may be submitted for DXCC

credit.

At the present time, DXCC approval is limited to SSB operation. RTTY contacts have not been approved. Giorgadze has been operating with oral permission from the North Korean authorities, but the ARRL is satisfied on the basis of written information submitted that the P5/4L4FN operation conforms with DXCC rules and should be accepted for credit.

The P5/4L4FN operation is not a DXpedition; Giorgadze is employed by the United Nations World Food Program and often spends as much as 12 hours a day on the job, operating in his off hours.

According to *The Daily DX*, Giorgadze learned this week that he will be in North Korea until at least July 2003. He tried for more than two years to obtain permission to operate Amateur Radio and finally was given the okay last year. A favorite hangout has been 21.225 MHz (he works split and listens up). He's also been a frequent visitor to 10 meters. Now that his operation has been okayed for DXCC, Giorgadze has indicated that he plans to be more active on the air.

Bruce Paige, KK5DO, has been acting as QSL manager and liaison for P5/4L4FN. He said this week that the first QSL cards should be going out within a few weeks. Paige offers an on-line log, additional news and information, and a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the operation on his AMSAT Net Web site <<<http://www.amsatnet.com>>>; Click on the "P5 North Korea" link. *From the ARRL Letter for 5 April 2002*

Dinner Before the BARA Meeting

Ed, NE2W, is taking reservations for anyone who would like to meet at Little Venice at 5:30 PM for dinner before the April meeting. Leave a message for him at (607) 723-2634 or e-mail him (Edward@stny.rr.com) if you are interested.

Ed has posted a menu at <<<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/w2ow/files/LittleVenice.htm>>>. A map can be found at <<<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/w2ow/files/Binghamton.htm>>>.

Operating and Other Events

17 APRIL: SKYWARN TRAINING. Join us at the BARA Meeting for SKYWARN Training provided by the National Weather Service.

25 APRIL: CQ WPX CW CONTEST. Shall we plan to make this a Club Effort? Let us know.

4 MAY: BARA HAMFEST! Mark your calendars and join the fun at Tioga County's Marvin Park Fairgrounds.

8 MAY: SVARA MEETING, 7:30 PM. Office of Emergency Services.

Club Officers and Committees			
President	George Allen	K2CM	760-2775
Vice President	Bob McCabe	KC2DSS	748-9808
Secretary	Ed Krymowski	NE2W	723-2634
Treasurer	Paul Slocum	N2NCB	687-2057
Directors	Bob Handel	K2FU	693-4310
	Ed Plesnar	KB2SCF	754-3810
	Ron Regan	N2RWK	722-6790
	Mel Snitchler	WE2K	723-9612
W2OW Trustee	Frank Scoblick	N2HR	729-4249
Newsletter	Ed Plesnar	KB2SCF	754-3810

BARA, The Binghamton Amateur Radio Association



is an ARRL Affiliated Club

Next General Meeting

7:30 PM, Wednesday, April 17th
Unitarian Universalist Church
Riverside Drive, Binghamton, Next to Lourdes Hospital

Board Meeting

7:00 PM, Wednesday May 1st
Broome Community College Campus, Office of Emergency Services (West Side of Campus)

Exam Session

7:00 PM, Monday April 29th
Vestal Public Library, Route 434 Vestal
1:30 PM, Saturday May 11th
Endicott Fire Station, Across from UE High School

BARA Dues

\$18/year Single Member; \$27/year Family