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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

August 2002

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

The President's Corner

Have You Tried VHF/UHF Simplex? When I first started using the VHF/UHF bands, I used a borrowed tube type, 6-meter AM rig. There were a lot of other hams in the Doylestown, PA area also working 6-meter AM on 52.525 MHz. When I was home, I would turn on the rig and monitor. Eventually a mobile or fixed station would call, there would be a few replies, and a "round table" would ensue. Although we had no repeaters there was still a lot of activity and it was pretty easy to make a VHF contact. There were no time-out timers and we could — and did — talk as long as we wanted. We also monitored several 10-meter frequencies and worked stations on 10-meter AM for distances of 15-20 miles.

Years later I moved to Liverpool, NY and with other hams formed the Liverpool Amateur Radio Club (LARC). We put a repeater up on 31/91, but many club members still operated simplex on 146.52 or 146.55. It was an effective way to keep track of friends: We could carry on long conversations without worrying about repeater timeouts, and we knew our friends were always monitoring the simplex frequencies.

Listening to the VHF/UHF bands in the Binghamton Area, it appears to me that operators using the bands above 50MHz are much too dependent on repeaters and should consider establishing some simplex frequencies on which to contact their friends from out of town. For example, why not monitor a frequency such as 146.52 and tell everyone that you are monitoring this frequency? If someone is mobile and starts to get out of range, you can then switch to a repeater frequency.

Think about a severe weather emergency — an emergency that takes out power lines. If this happens, most repeaters will go off the air and simplex operation will become a necessity if you are to be of any help in the emergency. Take time now to find out just how far your rig will go when operating simplex. — *DE*

George, K2CM

Proposed Change to the BARA Constitution

At the General Meeting in September BARA will vote on a change to the Club Constitution that makes the Club Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) Members of the BARA Board. This change would permit the Board to conduct business with a quorum of five members. It addresses problems with the present arrangement where the absence of two or more Board Members prevents any action by the Board. Under the existing constitutional provisions the only Officer who can vote is the President and he can only vote to break a tie.

Update on the Milks Property

As many members are aware the Milks family has approached the Club and requested that we make an offer on the Shack Property. The Officers and Board (as authorized by a vote of the Membership at the June General Meeting) are in the process of developing an offer which, if accepted, would be contingent on a vote of the Membership at a General Meeting.

A decision to make an offer on the property and commit the Club's resources is not one that should be taken lightly and all Members should have an opportunity to make their views known. The Shack is a great resource and over the years it has been the focus of many BARA Activities. Our Antenna Farm and Operating Setup are superb. Some of the funding for the Shack was provided by the Club, but an equal — even a greater — amount has been donated by Individual Club Members making the Shack truly a Group Undertaking that is open to all members. On the other hand, It might be argued that buying the property would over-commit the Club. In the end it is you — the BARA Membership — who will decide and we ask each member to seriously consider this question and to come to the Board and General Meetings to comment.

Finally, with the possibility of a change in our status on the Hilltop the Officers and Board have deferred any action on the replacement of our existing Tower. If conditions warrant, the existing structure will be removed, but no new construction will take place until all issues surrounding the property are settled.

WSKG Tower

Progress continues in the negotiations to transfer the old WSKG Tower and Property in the woods behind the BARA Shack from WSKG to BARA. Inquiries about this tower were initiated several months ago and WSKG has responded in a positive way by offering to give the site and structures to BARA for the cost of the legal work.

Although the area is too small for any extensive Operating Positions the tower is a solid structure and might serve well as a Repeater Site or an additional HF Antenna location.

Skywarn Notes

In late May/early June Scott Bauer, W2LC, our Western New York Section Manager announced some structural changes to the Regional SKYWARN organization.

Overall operations are the responsibility of the Skywarn Executive Committee consisting of two people from the National Weather Service, the Eastern Pennsylvania Section Manager and the Western New York Section Manager. The Section Managers have the option of appointing a representative to the Executive committee.

A Skywarn Advisory Committee will support the Executive Committee. Two National Weather Service people, an Amateur Radio Skywarn Coordinator and the Section Emergency Coordinators for Western New York and Eastern Pennsylvania compose the Advisory Committee. The Emergency Coordinators have the option of designating representatives.

The Amateur Radio Skywarn Coordinator will be appointed by the Western New York Section Manager as one of the Emergency Coordinators within the ARRL Western New York Field Organization. He or She will have no county or regional duties, but will specialize as "Amateur Radio Skywarn Coordinator for the Binghamton National Weather Service". The Coordinator does not have to be an ARRL Member. To assure accountability the Coordinator will report to the Section Managers and Emergency Coordinators on the Executive

P5/4L4FN QSL Manager Bruce Paige, KK5DO, reports some good news and some bad news. Giorgadze has repaired his Ameritron AL-80A linear (which had a blown rectifier bridge), but he has had to take down his Hex Beam because the

and Advisory Committees and the appointment will be reviewed and renewed on a yearly basis.

Scott has named Ford Drake, AB2HS, the interim Skywarn Coordinator. He invites application from other interested parties and will make a permanent appointment once the new structure has been communicated to the Amateur Radio Community and others have had a chance to apply for the position. — *based on material provided by Jack, KB2YEN*

ARES Net

Bill, KB2SIN, has been named Net Manager for a Broome County ARES Net to meet every other week at 19:30 hours. The Net will meet on the SVARA 146.82 machine and is scheduled for Thursday August 8th and Thursday August 22nd. The schedule for September and beyond will be announced later. It's been a few years since Broome County has had a regular ARES Net and all amateurs are invited and encouraged to participate in the Net's success.

Yard Work in the Woods

The Clean-Up Party at the July General Meeting was a big success. Ray, KC2GIL, and Red, KC2HKB, were the first to arrive and the weed-whacker was buzzing like a Navy Vibroplex when Ed, KB2SCF, and Brian, K2DLB, arrived behind them. Ron, N2RWK, was on the scene soon after and tending the grill. Assisting with Saws, Brush Cutters, and other tools of the Trade were Bob, K2FU, and Paul, N2NCB.

Ron had the burgers and dogs ready somewhat before 6:00 and the early-birds feasted while Bob, WS2U, and Ford, AB2HS, dove into the remaining work. George, K2CM, was only shooting pictures that evening, but he deserves credit for his weekend attack on the growth inside the WSKG fence.

As 7:30 approached others arrived and helped here and there until a brief Business Meeting was convened by George. The only items of significance were a second reading of the proposed amendment to the BARA Constitution (mentioned previously) and a motion (carried) to purchase a new Repeater Antenna.

DX News From North Korea

The ARRL DXCC Desk has announced that it will now accept RTTY contacts made on or after 1 November 2001 with Ed Giorgadze, P5/4L4FN, for DXCC credit.

most he was using wasn't strong enough to support both the beam and the rotor. According to Paige, Giorgadze "is looking for something that will work better, and that might have to wait until he goes back to Beijing in four to five weeks. His work at the

present time has kept him from doing as much operating as he would like, but he will be back on more as things settle down." Giorgadze was featured in a program about Amateur Radio in North Korea that aired July 5 on Radio Austria. — *from the ARRL Letter for 19 July 2002*

Video Review — Radio Days

If Garrison Keillor's "Prairie Home Companion" introduced a new generation to the magic of live radio, it can be said that Woody Allen's "Radio Days" reminded that generation of just how the magic box colored our lives in the twentieth century.

Not so much a plotted story as a series of vignettes, "Radio Days" weaves snippets of stories about radio personalities and events with the trials and tribulations of a young Jewish boy growing up in New Jersey and his extended family. Sometimes hilarious and sometimes bittersweet the movie has, throughout, the stamp of honest affection for family and for the memories tuned by the glowing dial. Nicest (and most memorable) are the voices: the magic, haunting, voices of the performers "on the other side" of the dial. Some of the performers are actual personalities from the Golden Age and the nuance and rhythm of their voices works its magic and reminds one that Radio is truly better because the pictures are "all inside your head".

"Radio Days" is available on DVD and may, with luck, be found in the VHS format as well.

Evenings With Elmer

Growing up I remember occasional mention in magazines of Modern Radio Laboratories and occasionally at Hamfests a tattered and worn MRL pamphlet would appear in a box of manuals and assorted paper. Not knowing better I assumed that MRL had gone the way of Hammerlund, Hallicrafters, and the many other names and companies that used to crowd the back pages of "QST", "CQ", and "Popular Electronics".

Well, I was wrong. MRL is alive and well and Paul Nelson is keeping the flame burning with a very nice selection of the works of Elmer G. Osterhoudt. I came across his webpage at <<<http://www.modernradiolabs.com>>>. Since I couldn't decide which *one* or *two* manuals to buy, I jumped for the package deal and ended up buying the "Complete Works" for \$35.00. Within a week a large packet of pamphlets and detail prints arrived and several evenings of delight ensued as I went back in time to the '60s, '50s, '40s and earlier. Elmer advertised himself as "with radio since 1915" and by golly, I believe him. From crystal sets to transistors he covered a lot of ground and spread the

gospel of home brewing to several generations.

If you are looking for superhets and detailed theory, Elmer will probably disappoint you, but if you don't mind crystal sets, one tube 'regens, and practical explanations then MRL might just have something for you.

If you are looking to point someone towards a Science Project or to hook them into Our Wonderful Hobby, MRL may have just the Handbook you need. Check out the MRL webpage or write to Paul at Modern Radio Labs; PO Box 14902 WK; Minneapolis, MN 55414-0902.

BARA Picnic

It's August and the BARA Picnic will be held on the third Wednesday (August 21st) up at the Shack.

Plan to come at about 5:00 for the traditional Mini-Hamfest and bring your treasures for some high-powered horse-trading in the field. The Shack will be open for tours and operating. Ron, N2RWK, will have the grill fired up and we can expect a good feed sometime around 6:00. Bring a dish to pass (*but no soda, we will have plenty there!*), chairs to sit on and a table if you have one to spare. Bring the family and plan for a good time by all!

Guests are always welcome and if you happen to know a new Ham, an old Ham, an inactive Ham, or anyone else who doesn't know us — bring them along because we'd like to get to know them!

By the way, if you are bringing kids, do give Hedy a call at 748-4387 and let her know how many and their ages so that she can plan accordingly.

SVARA Coffee Break

Ford, AB2HS, informs us that the traditional SVARA Coffee Break at the Whitney Point Rest Stop is canceled for 2002 due to the flattening and reconstruction of the Rest Stop.

Operating and Other Events

21 AUGUST: BARA PICNIC & GENERAL MEETING 5:00 PM. Mini-Hamfest at 5:00 followed by Picnic and a brief General Meeting at the Shack!

44 SEPTEMBER: BARA BOARD MEETING, 7:00 PM. Office of Emergency Services.

7 SEPTEMBER: POCONO ARK & EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA ARA HAMFEST. Bartonsville, PA.

11 SEPTEMBER: SVARA MEETING, 7:30 PM. Office of Emergency Services.

14 SEPTEMBER: RAGS HAMFEST. Radio Amateurs of Greater Syracuse.

21 SEPTEMBER: DELAWARE-LEHIGH ARC HAMFEST. Schnecksville, PA.

28 SEPTEMBER: ELMIRA HAMFEST. ARA of the
Southern Tier; Horseheads, NY.