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# **BARA** Facts

**Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association**

**December 2002**

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

## **Election of BARA Officers and Directors**

The Election of Officers and Directors took place at the November General Meeting. Bob McCabe, KC2DSS, stood as President after George, K2CM, stated that he was unable to serve again. Jack Connors, WB2GHH, agreed to stand as Vice President in Bob's place. Ron Reagan, N2RWK, ran for Secretary and Paul Slocum, N2NCB, returns as Treasurer.

Steve Orzelek, N2MSB, joins us as a new Director for 2003 and will serve with veterans Bob Handel, K2FU, Ed Plesnar, KB2SCF, and Mel Snitchler, WE2K.

With one candidate for each position and no additional nominations from the floor a motion to accept the slate by authorizing the Secretary to cast one vote for the candidates was made, seconded, and carried. The Election was then declared complete.

Many thanks to Bob, Jack, and Steve for throwing their hats into the ring and also to the "old hands" who were willing to stay on for another year. The willingness of BARA Members to stand for office and to serve keeps our club viable and is much appreciated. It's another job, but a job that has to be done and without Officers and Directors BARA could not function as a legal entity. Thanks also to our outgoing officers George, K2CM, and Ed, NE2W, for their past service.

## **New Hamfest Chairman**

Brian, K2DLB, has agreed to serve as Hamfest Chairman for 2003. We look forward to working with him on the Hamfest and all members are asked to support the Hamfest, our main club fund-raiser, by helping with the planning as it unfolds in January and the execution as the big day draws near.

We should also take a moment to thank Bill, N2BC, who has served as Chairman for the past several Hamfests.

## **BARA Christmas Party**

*Please remember that the General Meeting for December (on the 18<sup>th</sup>) will be our Christmas Party at Russell's in Endicott (across from the Enjoi Golf Course). If you have not made your Reservations through Hedy, AA2MU, at (607) 748-4387, please do so soon.*

The plan is to meet in the dining area around 6:00 for seating with orders and service to begin at about 6:30. Expect good food, fellowship, and fun in the best BARA tradition!

***Remember, we won't be at the Church, we'll all be at Russell's. We hope to see YOU there!***

## **SKYWARN News**

The NWS SKYWARN Amateur Radio Advisory Committee meeting of 2002 was conducted at E. A. Link field on 16 November 2002. Among other business the following HF frequencies were agreed upon for use during SKYWARN and other emergency events when the established two meter hub network or other communication paths have been disrupted within Central New York and Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The Primary Frequency is 3.955 MHz LSB; the Secondary Frequency is 7.237 MHz LSB.

The purpose for proposing these HF frequencies is to identify a daytime/nighttime coordination and/or reporting frequency. In the course of discussions leading to the frequency selection it was noted that 3.925 MHz LSB has become the frequency on which many of the New York State traffic nets meet. — *From a posting to the BARA Reflector by Jack Connors, WB2GHH*

## **The BARA Website**

If you haven't looked at our Website lately you may be surprised to see the changes there. Don, N2NON, has been

working to keep the material on the site current and lively.

Every month the *BARA Facts* is posted in Adobe PDF Format so our Newsletter is available and visible to any surfers who happen by. Don has also added some resources for getting your Amateur Radio License under the "Licensing Class" button. If you know someone who wants to get their Technician Ticket or if you are helping to elmer someone on your own you will find materials there that will help including a complete study guide to the Technician Pool.

If you don't know how to find BARA on the Web, just look at the Masthead of this Newsletter, type the URL into your browser, and tell your friends!

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### **Wear Your Colors**

It's too bad that people and organizations we deal with may not have any knowledge that we are amateur radio operators (HAMS). A number of recent personal instances prompt me to decompose this article — so to speak.

A few weeks ago — by an odd happenstance — I received a telephone call from a HAM in Georgia. He inquired if I knew of a person in the Binghamton area that might give assistance to a person who wants to become a HAM. He located me by poking around the Internet and finding me listed as a contact for BARA. He passed along the person's telephone number and then the name. The person ended up being someone I interface with thirty or fifty times a year (we are both on the same pistol team). My friend never knew I was a HAM and I pointed out a second HAM on our team and identified three other HAMS on other teams in the same pistol league. More than likely there were other HAMS standing next to me during the pistol competition, HAMS that I didn't know.

Last Sunday morning I decided to attend a pancake breakfast conducted by the local fire company. I wore my BARA jacket and during the feed, an elderly gentleman (someone older than me) tapped me on the shoulder and introduced himself as member of BARA from many years ago. I invited him to last week's meeting. Did anyone greet the stranger? Still later a second person called out to me. He wasn't sure it was me until he saw the radio club jacket and it turned out that he was the former Town of Binghamton Highway superintendent (now retired for many years). We recalled some of the hilltop exploits he assisted with over the years.

Then just last evening, I'm at a pistol match and another elderly chap started a conversation about

radio as a result of his seeing my jacket. Seems he mastered the code and did a lot of ten meter work "back before the war." I asked him his call sign, but he confessed that he never had any, but "they never caught" him. He was a bootlegger who ceased operations in 1939.

One moral of this story: There are times for HAMS where being visible counts. Presently BARA finds itself lacking in positive (and even negative) public opinion. Why? Are we too stealthy? Sometimes that's good, but sometimes it's not so good. Get out to those local hose house and church breakfasts and dinners and *wear the colors*. Get to the next town board or school board meeting and *wear the colors*. Get to those local social events; support the activities of other organizations; and — did I mention — *wear the colors*.

It would be great if our public officials met us and knew who we are before we HAVE TO interface with them on hobby or club issues; if they knew WHO and WHAT we are before we approach them. Of course if you intend to make an a-- out of yourself, please wear some *other* organization's colors. — *CU on the radio DE WB2GHH*

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### **When it Snows**

Ford, AB2HS, informs us that he plans to initiate a "Snow Spotter" Net on the 146.82 Repeater at times when we have three or more inches of snow. He stresses that this Net would generally run before or after regular Nets and after heavy snowfalls. The purpose is to collect snowfall data so that the National Weather Service at Binghamton can calibrate their radars and plot snowfall from actual ground reports. The data collected will also be included in the reports that the National Weather Service releases to the media.

This is not a SKYWARN activity and it would run at times when SKYWARN is not activated. Besides collecting data, the primary purposes are Radar Calibration and training in Net/Reporting Procedures.

Ford can provide additional information, but the main thing to keep in mind is to measure snowfall (using a ruler) in an open area that is at "ground temperature" so decks, driveways, and similar areas are ruled out. The average of several readings in different spots should be taken and reported via the Net.

Listen on 146.82 for further information and remember that during an emergency or SKYWARN event

146.82 is the Primary Repeater in Broome County.

The Lyons Press has reissued one of the volumes of the 1913 edition of *The Boy Mechanic* under the title *Practical Projects for the Handyman*. In the space of 469 pages (including index) we find a Time Capsule of the days when Electric Toasters were a novelty and Automobiles and Airplanes were rare enough to excite interest, clog streets with onlookers, and empty shops and stores by their presence.

Scattered throughout the pages are brief descriptions of magic tricks; suggestions for maintaining and using tools; hints for farm, home, and shop; plans for kites and even gliders. There are also numerous electrical projects including some plans for simple non-tube (because they were expensive curiosities) receivers and transmitters. Some of the projects might be unwise or even dangerous today, but all are interesting as examples of the way people worked, played, and lived less than a hundred years ago.

For pleasant and interesting browsing or as a Christmas Gift for a hard-to-please tinkerer you will find *Practical Projects for the Handy Man* well worth its \$19.95 cover price. It is available locally from the Cracker Barrel Country Store or from Lyons Press (ISBN 1-58574-276-7).

### **Propagation Resources**

We learn the basics of Radio Wave Propagation while studying for our Tickets and through use of the various bands we become familiar with some of the “real world” results of propagation, but it’s nice to have the basics summarized and readily accessible. Fortunately there are a number of resources on the Internet and some useful ones are summarized here.

The US Government maintains the Space Environment Center and their Webpage is located at <<<http://www.sec.noaa.gov/>>>. Besides predictions for Solar Events and reports on Current Conditions there are also a number of brief papers under the *Education* path.

Another resource comes from “Down Under” where the Australian Space Weather Agency maintains the IPS Radio and Space Services. You can find their page at <<<http://www.ips.gov.au/>>> and it is well worth a visit. Their *Education* section is quite interesting and includes a lengthy (23 pages) *Introduction to HF Radio Propagation* as well as a shorter document on *Transequatorial Radio Propagation*. Other pages provide details on the effects of Space Weather and effective use of Propagation Predictors.

SGC is well-known in the world of Commercial and Government Communications and makes several products

### **Connecting With the Past**

popular in Amateur circles. Their Website at <<<http://www.sgcworld.com/index.html>>> includes a link to on-line publications including their *HF SSB Users Guide*. You do have to provide an e-Mail address and other details to access the publications and you will probably be placed on their monthly Newsletter e-Mail list, but the book is a very effective “mini course” in Radio Communications and makes a useful adjunct to other study materials. True, the illustrations generally involve SGC products, but the book is free and would be well-worth double (or even triple) the price. A note of caution, though, sometimes their Server misbehaves and serves up a blank page (for whatever reason) and it may take several tries to get in solid.

Many other resources can be found with just a little digging and the above notes are meant to suggest a “jumping off” point for some online Propagation Research. Good Luck and Good Signals to you!

### **Net Reminders**

Keep in mind the following local 2-Meter Nets. They are a great place to meet some of the VHF “locals” and also a place to connect with and encourage some of the newer members of our Amateur Radio Fraternity:

**STAR NET:** Nightly at 1830 hours local on the 146.73 Repeater. This is a Traffic Net in the National Traffic System and features time for comments from each participant.

**BRAT NET:** Sunday Evenings at 2000 hours local on the 147.390 Repeater (the BARA Machine). This is an informal net that provides a forum for technical questions and comments.

**BROOME COUNTY ARES NET:** First and Third Sunday of each month at 1930 hours local on the 146.82 Repeater. This Net is devoted to Emergency Training and Preparation.

You’ll find that newcomers are welcome to join any of the above Nets and the atmosphere is informal and friendly.

**Merry Christmas to You and to Yours and all (and only) the best that life has to offer in 2003 from the Staff of the BARA Facts!**

### **Operating and Other Events**

**18 DEC: BARA CHRISTMAS PARTY.** Russell’s in Endicott, NOT at the Church!

**30 DEC: AMATEUR RADIO EXAM.** 7:00 PM, Vestal Public

Library.

**31 DEC: STRAIGHT KEY NIGHT.** See QST Magazine for details.

**1 JAN: BARA BOARD MEETING.** 7:00 PM, Office of Emergency Services.

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

**11 JAN: AMATEUR RADIO TESTING.** 1:30 PM, Endicott Fire Station.

### Club Officers and Committees

President	Bob McCabe	KC2DSS	748-9808
Vice President	Jack Connors	WB2GHH	
Secretary	Ron Regan	N2RWK	722-6790
Treasurer	Paul Slocum	N2NCB	687-2057
Directors	Bob Handel	K2FU	693-4310
	Steve Orzelek	N2MSB	
	Ed Plesnar	KB2SCF	754-3810
	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***

6:00 PM (NOT 7:30) , Wednesday, December 18th Party at Russell's in Endicott, NOT at the Unitarian Universalist Church!

### ***Board Meeting***

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

### ***Exam Session***

7:00 PM Monday, December 30 25th  
Vestal Public Library, Route 434 Vestal  
1:30 PM, Saturday January 11th  
Endicott Fire Station, Across from UE High School

### ***BARA Dues***

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

***Binghamton Amateur Radio Association, Inc.***  
***P.O. Box 853***  
***Binghamton, New York 13902***

## ***First Class***

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