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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

February 2002

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

President's Corner

Some Changes to the Meeting Order: We have moved the program portion of our meetings to 7:30, so guests will not have to sit through a business meeting. Ask a friend to join you at the next meeting. The program will start right away and you friend will not have to sit thru club business.

The programs that Bob, KC2DSS, has planned for the next several months should interest anyone! February will be a program on dipole antennas; March will be an auction and a talk on using a microcontroller for building a simple keyer or other project; April will be Skywarn training. These programs should be of interest to all...do bring a friend with you. We will try to have more programs on simple construction projects.

At the last board meeting, we adopted some other changes to our meeting structure in an effort to reduce time spent in meetings so that we can spend more time on programs. Starting in March, we will include committee reports and the secretaries reports in the newsletter. We will ask anyone who has business for the club to talk to the president before the meeting starts to get on the agenda. After the program we will address items listed on the agenda. You may still address the club toward the end of the meeting, without being on the agenda if you wish. This is an experiment and is not cast in concrete. We want to spend more time on programs and less on routine business items that can be covered in the newsletter. We feel that our club can grow if we spend more time on quality programs.

For Sale - One used Gallbladder cheap: Vice President, Bob, KC2DSS has graciously agreed to run the meeting on February 20th while your president has his gallbladder removed in the building on the other side of the church parking lot.

The Club Shack: I am hoping to be at the club shack in March, April, and May to give new members a chance to operate from our location on Milks road. If anyone would like to use the shack, please contact me and I'll make arrangements to be there to show you how to set up and operate our equipment. We have equipment for bands ranging from 2 meters down to 160 meters. There is equipment for hams of all license classes and a wide assortment of antennas to help you make contacts throughout the world.

Until next month, 73 DE George Allen, K2CM

Tower News

At the request of the Board, Ron, AA2EQ, presented a proposal for refurbishing the 100-foot tower at the Club Shack. This tower has been up for a number of years and the Club has periodically spent money on maintenance and upkeep, however the arrangement of a tripod of telephone poles surmounted by sections of tower is showing its age and several members have suggested that the unit is coming to the end of its useful life. Ron (who is trained in Mechanical Engineering and who has climbed the existing tower many times) agreed to examine the structure and propose the steps that the Club might take to maintain a 100-foot tower.

Ron's presentation was thorough and the conclusion is that the timber members need replacement while the metal sections at the top are damaged from the torque and flexing of the tower. Although the guy-wires are sound it is not advisable to simply re-tension them because there is too much "give" between the timber and metal sections combined. Continuing current maintenance might add another three years to the life of the system, but then it would have to be replaced. After considering the condition of the system and the fact that we just renewed our lease for the hilltop, it was proposed

to allocate funds for replacement now.

The proposal is to use standard Rohn tower sections throughout and to go by the engineering specifications for a 140-foot tower although our plans are only to install a 100-foot tower. This approach allows us the opportunity to increase the height in the future, if the club desires. After discussion funds for refurbishing the Tower were included in the budget for 2002.

Esther Valky, AA2AP, Scholarship

Hedy, AA2MU, reported on the BARA Scholarship to honor Esther Valky, AA2AP, Silent Key and for many years a Club Member who inspired us as members and welcomed newcomers into our ranks. Details on the eligibility and rules for the scholarship are still being worked out, but the 2002 budget includes initial funding for this memorial.

2002 Budget Passed

Many thanks to the members who turned out for the budget discussions. Besides the Tower Allocation and the Scholarship Allocation (both mentioned previously) the bulk of the budget was for the usual operating expenses of the club. The Tower and Scholarship funding are not contained by dues and projected Hamfest revenue so the budget draws on the funds we have in the bank. There was some discussion and the budget passed with no objections and the support of the club as represented by the turnout at the meeting was heartening.

Another BARA Award

Continuing to wrap up items from the 2001 year, our president George, K2CM, presented a BARA Award for 2001 to Bill Coleman, N2BC, for the many things he has done for the club at the Shack, in running the Hamfest, and for service as an Officer and Board Member. Bill has been a fixture at BARA events for many years, but because he was (uncharacteristically) absent from the Christmas Party Jack, WB2GHH, could not present the award at that time.

ARES Notes

At the January BARA Meeting, Jack, KB2YEN, our local EC spoke briefly noting that one of his priorities is to establish an accurate ARES roster for our area. Since the current registration is badly out of date, Jack is requesting that everyone register again and we include an application with this issue of the *BARA Facts*. Emergency Service has received a lot of favorable attention since the events of September 11th and the FCC and others have gone on record with support of Amateur Radio. Please do your part to support this effort by taking

a moment to fill out the form, fold it up (it's pre-addressed), tape it closed, and stick on a stamp.

Jack also remarked that there is interest in running another exercise similar to the Y2K Preparation he coordinated in 1999. We look forward to hearing more about this in the future.

Public Service: MS Walk

Ford, AB2HS, reminds everyone of the 2002 MS Walk scheduled for the Sunday after Easter (April 7th). The event runs from Seton High School to Otesnago Park and back. We'll post details as they become available, but please keep this event in mind as you plan your schedule for the Spring.

Honorary Member Inducted New BARA Members

Several new members joined our ranks in January.

The club elected USN Capt. Daniel W. Bursch, KD5PNU, an honorary member of BARA. Capt. Bursch is a NASA Astronaut and lived in our area for many years. He is a 1975 graduate of Vestal Senior High School and considers Vestal his hometown.

Dean Lawton, Sr., KC2IKA and Don Gottschall, KB3COS were also elected members of BARA. Both these gentlemen are a friendly voice on the other end of the circuit on the HF and/or VHF bands.

Ninety-Nine and Counting

Did you know that the BARA Membership roster stands at ninety-nine. Our membership figures break down to seventy-two individual and eleven family. BARA is the oldest radio club in the Triple Cities and it has a lot to offer. Why not invite a friend to one of our meetings?

"Dolly"

From the Radio Rescuers Journal Entry #2.

Not too long ago, at the Orlando Hamcation, I happened upon a balloon type '27 triode. Just your garden variety A.C. tube. Probably dated to around 1929. It had lots of dust and some kinda smeary stuff on it, making it look really bad. I offer to pay a buck for it, and the guy behind the table says "sure."

Off I go with my little treasure to hopefully use it to give life to a rather dormant Doerle 'Regen I was reconstructing.

Old glass tubes are a funny sort of device, with a charm all their own. Mostly they are mirrored with a silvery internal coating, and I would be a liar if I told you that I knew what caused it or even what it was.

Just one of those mysteries I choose to retain as a

Very simple devices they are, little more than a dim lightbulb with extra wire stuffed in to form an anode, filament, an indirectly heated cathode and a gridiron. All this is mounted internally on a single glass pillar, usually bearing the hand written mark of some unknown quality inspector. A cypher of a sort, usually a number or a number-letter combination. Locked in a vacuum of time for the life of that tube.

I wonder if they had any idea how long some of those tubes would last?

Well, after coming home, I began to work on cleaning off that tube, using dishwashing liquid and a soft cloth. The smeary stuff came off, but the dust had hardened into a thin filmy concrete which took a little elbow grease.

"Uhh-ohh", I thought as I began to hand polish off the surface: "there goes any decal or print on the envelope!" But I consoled myself with the knowledge that at least I would still have that classy silvery stuff, whatever it was.

And then I saw it! Behind the silver! There was an area in that silver coating that was very thin, exposing the central pillar of the tube. Almost like looking thru a keyhole, the silver framing the view. There, written on the pillar for all to see, a single name.

"Dolly".

No cypher, no number, no arbitrary letter, but a name! Immediately, this became no ordinary tube! It became a link to a person. I began to wonder who this person was. Did she work part time for RCA to get thru school? Did she fare well thru the Depression just about to befall her? Did she take pride in that tube as she carefully painted the five letters of her name on that tiny, tiny pillar before it was sent in for the envelope and evacuation process? Am I getting carried away?

I had a suspicion that of all the '27s in the wide world, THIS one would be among the best performing. It had to, it bore her name...and it is.

Remember, whenever you affix your name to something, that something may last well beyond your puny years. Remember too, that the performance or quality of that thing will be forever inextricably linked to you. Whatever you do, do your best.

And Dolly, wherever you are....thanks! — *Gary Johanson, WD4NKA (from his website <http://www.qsl.net/wd4nka/>, used with permission)*

QRP Books

It's nice to see that Greg of QRP Books has been showing up at all the local Hamfests with a larger and

mystery.

larger selection of interesting titles. Besides the expected books on low-power communication, Greg has a nice stock of ARRL and RSGB titles. He also has some RF and QRP "classics" that you don't find on many shelves. Greg "homebrews" as well and usually has something interesting to show, sell, or demonstrate. Look for Greg at the Hamfests or check out his webpage (now being redesigned) at <http://www.qrpbooks.com/>.

CQ VHF Quarterly

A note in the *ARRL Letter* informs us that CQ Communications will resume publication of *CQ VHF* this May. The publishers hope to retain the conversational format of the original *CQ VHF* with a greater emphasis on technical topics. US Subscriptions will cost \$25.00 a year.

General Reminder

Ed, KB2SCF, reminds you that if you are interested in upgrading to General, please don't forget to drop a note to kb2scf@arrl.net or call (607) 754-3810. Two people have already expressed interest in upgrading!

Upcoming Programs

Bob, KC2DSS, plans another program on Antenna Construction for the February meeting. He promises a new twist on the Center Insulator and some improvements on the Ground Plane design he presented in January.

In the works for March is a program on brewing your own keyer using a microcontroller by George, K2CM. At the same meeting we are planning an auction of parts, materials, and sundry valuable treasures. This is something we haven't done for a long time and it promises to be a lot of fun. The centerpiece of the collection is a box of material donated by Mel, KB2FLU.

If you would like to donate an item to the club for auction, please bring it to the March meeting.

April is our traditional time for SKYWARN Training.

Operating and Other Events

23 FEBRUARY: HAMFEST AT HORSEHEADS. Spend the day at the National Guard Armory on Colonial Drive. At 65 mph Horseheads is closer than ever as the 2002 Hamfest Season gets underway!

2/3 MARCH: ARRL DXCC PHONE CONTEST. Ron, AA2EQ hopes to make this an event that puts BARA on the map in a big way. The Shack should be running full-bore. Let Ron know if you want to schedule a shift or stop by anytime and have fun!

4 MAY: BARA HAMFEST! Mark your calendars and join

the fun at Tioga County's Marvin Park
Fairgrounds.