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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

January 2002

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

President's Corner

I'm glad to have the opportunity to serve the club in a leadership position for the coming year. I get a lot out of BARA so I am happy to be able to give some time and effort to the club in return.

We are fortunate that BARA has a lot of members who wish to pitch in and run major club functions such as our Hamfest, dinners, club programs, communications for community events, and the like. It takes a lot of people putting in a lot of time to organize and run these various events. Thanks to all for all the help over the past years.

The Club Dinner: Specials thanks to Hedy, AA2MU, for putting on one more fine holiday dinner! My wife Gloria and I had a great time. It gave Gloria a chance to meet club members in person. As usual the food was good and the dinner was enjoyable. A very special thanks to Malcom, KC2EOV, for donating a hand made chair to raise money for the club. It was won by the daughter of Jack, WB2GHH. She says that it matches her other chairs to a "T".

Operating Opportunities: If you don't have a station at home or if the noise level at your house is too high for enjoyable operation, you can use the BARA shack on the hill off Milks Rd. in the Town of Binghamton. This is a good place to go for general rag chewing, working DX, or contesting. I get up there frequently and will be glad to take you up and show you how to use the equipment. We have equipment and antennas for all bands from 160 meters up to 450 mhz. We are planning to upgrade antennas and equipment so operating conditions will be even better in years to come.

The only things that you need when operating
One award went to Stan Progy, W2EWM, for his

equipment at the shack are to be licensed, a BARA member (guests are welcome to accompany a BARA member), and your logbook. You may also wish to take a bottle of water or beverage too, since there is no running water at the shack. In the winter, you will have to walk a third of a mile up the driveway through snow. Wear warm gloves, hat, boots, pants, and jacket in the winter. The shack is heated, but it takes a while for it to warm up on very cold days.

I worked DX from the shack on Dec 22nd and made contacts with Namibia, Oman, Belgium, Asiatic Russia, and many other countries. I also had some nice conversations with stations in Texas and some of the Southern states. It was a nice enjoyable day. A few of us will probably go to the shack for the 160 meter contest in January. Please join us for some winter fun.

Bring a friend to a meeting, show a friend Ham Radio in action: There are many hams in the Tri Cities area who are not members of BARA and many who don't know about our club. We can make our club grow by inviting friends that you meet on local repeaters or in person to our club meetings. We can also make our club grow and provide a community service by each one of us taking an interested youngster under our wings. Show a friend or acquaintance how ham radio works. Invite a friend along the next time you provide communications for a community event.

Until next month, 73 DE George Allen, K2CM

BARA Award

Our outgoing president Jack, WB2GHH presented two "BARA Awards" at the Christmas Party in December.

long and dedicated service to the Club. Stan is best

known for mowing the field up at the shack several times a summer and keeping the jungle at bay. The second award was presented to Ron Clothier, AA2EQ, in recognition for all the work he did up at the shack and for his championing of contests and other club activities.

Both of these awards are well-deserved and the short summaries above are just a bare outline of the thanks we owe to these members. Congratulations Stan & Ron, you have given of your time and resources to the club and BARA appreciates what you have done for us!

Antenna Updates & Refurbishment

For the past several months there has been discussion of changes to the antenna system up at the shack. In particular, the big tower which is supported by three telephone poles needs to be refurbished. This matter (and the expense involved) was discussed at the Board Meeting in January and will be taken up at the January General Meeting. This is a significant activity on the part of the club and one that needs the support of all our members, so please come to the meeting and be part of the discussion.

Donations & Contributions

In his notes for the month George, K2CM, mentioned the chair that Malcom, KC2EOV, raffled off at the Christmas Party. This "Special Prize" netted over thirty dollars for the club.

George himself deserves thanks for a \$200 donation he has made towards our plans to refurbish the big tower up on the hill.

And special thanks are due to a BARA member who wishes to remain anonymous and who donated \$600 to BARA. This donation was announced by Jack, WB2GHH at the Christmas Party.

Hamfest Time

In January the planning for the BARA Hamfest in Owego kicks into gear. Organization is getting underway and *all of the good jobs are still available!* If you would like to help out, please contact Bill Coleman, N2BC.

Seriously, the Hamfest is our only significant source of revenue for the club and the work is easier when it is shared. Yes, this is work, but it is also a lot of fun and thanks to the notes put together from Hamfests past

The Shack (and the Repeater) are the two high-

and to the careful oversight of Paul, N2NCB, we know what needs to be done and we only have to find the people to do it.

Now maybe that sounds like we are trolling for workers so I'll be honest and say that we are. There's no finer crew to work with than the Hamfest Team and I for one am looking forward to be a part of the activities once again. Please consider signing up for an hour or two and please don't forget that the real fun is in "Setup", "Teardown" and the horsing around and general Bravo Sierra that accompanies these activities. — Your Editor Ed, KB2SCF

Operating Events

Ron Clothier, AA2EQ, is excited about the upcoming 2002 Contest Season and is looking forward to putting BARA on the contest map in a big way. He would like to remind everyone of some upcoming events during which we hope to have the shack set up and running "big time":

- January 19/20: The ARRL VHF Sweepstakes
- February 16/17: Our first-ever CW Contest, the ARRL DXCC CW Contest
- March 2/3: The ARRL DXCC Phone Contest

Ron would like to see a good showing from the club and looks forward to our help and support. Please watch the BARA Facts, the Reflector, and come to the meetings for more information. Please consider stopping by for an hour or so even if you are "Not A Contester". You might find yourself bitten by the bug and even if you aren't it's fun to be around the shack when the team is running full-bore!

Budget Meeting in January

The January General Meeting is always the Budget Meeting. Our Secretary Paul, N2NCB, has done his usual thorough job putting together a detailed budget for the coming year.

Paul's Budget was, of course, a major item of discussion at the January Board meeting and several items were added to the proposal to reflect the need for upgrades and refurbishment at the shack site.

profile resources of BARA and affect all members

whether you use the Shack, operate VHF, or use the Autopatch we would like to have a good turnout to discuss the plan and to put it to a vote.

VE Testing Session Reminders

We are fortunate to have two opportunities for VE Testing in the Triple Cities in nearly every month:

- The Second Saturday of every month at the Endicott Fire Station with registration starting at 1:30 PM. (Contact VE Charlie Zalenski, KA2MKQ, 607-797-5777.)
- The Last Monday of every month (in May, the Monday before Memorial Day; in July, no exam) at the Vestal Public Library with registration starting at 7:00 PM. (Contact VE Bob Soltis, WA2VCS, 607-754-7940.)

Please remember that sessions are no longer held at the Office of Emergency Services. Those sessions are replaced by the Vestal Library sessions.

Question Pools to Remain Valid for Four Years

The Question Pool Committee of the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators has announced that starting with the new Amateur Extra (Element 4) question pool released November 30 and going into effect this July 1, all question pools will be valid for four years. QPC Chairman Scotty Neustadter, W4WW, says the shift from a three to a four-year schedule will enable the QPC to do a better job in developing syllabi and pools for the various examination elements and allow more opportunities for public input. — from The ARRL Letter, Vol 21, No 1.

General Class Anyone?

Since the code requirement for HF access is now 5 Words per Minute this might be a good time to see if there is any interest in a class for the General Ticket. If you have been sitting on the fence and would like to take the plunge and become a General, please contact Ed Plesnar, KB2SCF, (kb2scf@arrl.net) and let him know. If there is enough interest Ed will see if the club can set up a class.

On the same subject: If you would be willing to help find a place for Licensing Classes to meet and to help handle the scheduling logistics, please contact Ed. This “job” would not involve any teaching, but it’s an

important support task. If someone is willing to cover this task it might be an opening for other club-sponsored educational activities.

Spark Gap Signal Heard for Hundreds of Miles

David Wilson, VE3BBN, reports that his commemorative spark gap transmissions on December 12, 2001 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Marconi's 1901 transatlantic experiments were heard hundreds of miles away.

Wilson, who lives near Niagara Falls, Ontario, built a low-power rotary spark transmitter and secured permission from Industry Canada (that country's FCC equivalent) to use it briefly on 80 meters. He transmitted "MARCONI S" twice a minute and said he got more than 450 reports, but he estimated that only about 60 of them were valid. "The best distance was Kansas City," he said--some 850 miles away. Dave noted that the majority of the reports were in the 200 to 400-mile range.

Additional information, photos and audio of what his transmitter sounds like are available on the "Spark Gap Transmitter Signals for Marconi Centennial" Web site at <http://www.qsl.net/g4rfr/marconi.htm>.— from The ARRL Letter, Vol 21, No 1.

Board Meetings

BARA Board Meetings are held on the First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Office of Emergency Services in the Public Safety Building behind Broome County Community College. Any member is welcome to attend these meetings. Their purpose is to discuss business and general club issues and to work them into a form that can be presented to the membership at the General Meeting.

If you have an idea for the club or a suggestion or if you would just like to kill an hour or so, please feel free to stop by the Board Meetings. BARA is *your* club and the meetings are *your* forum. Help us, your Officers and Directors, to make BARA an exciting, vital, and active club!