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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

October 2002

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

The President's Corner

First of all, please note my phone number that is listed in each issue of the BARA newsletter. If you have ideas, questions, or concerns about BARA, please call me or send an email to george@townsoft.com.

WE HAVE CHALLENGES AHEAD: Procuring a new Club Site is certainly a challenge. We need to find a hilltop location free from power line interference and suitable for both HF and VHF/UHF operation. Furthermore, it should have power and drive-up access. Although much of the operating from our Club Shack has been on the HF bands, there has still been a VHF/UHF contest presence at the shack! Consequently, our search is for a site that will meet both HF and VHF/UHF requirements. As our club has grown we find that many of our members are Technician Licensees who are limited to the VHF/UHF bands. Many of these operators have expressed interest in operating from our club site; consequently, a new site must be suitable for operation from all frequencies.

If you know of any property for sale that will meet our requirements, please contact a board member or officer, preferably by phone, and give him the information.

Another challenge facing our club is keeping BARA interesting to all its members. If you have ideas for programs please contact a board member or officer. If we offer interesting programs, more members will turn out for meetings.

Regarding the financial aspects of our club, we are going to have to undertake serious fund raising activities in order to buy property and move towers and equipment to a new site. We discussed several ideas at the last meeting. Some were received well, some were unpalatable. Please give us your input on how to raise the money we need. Join us at a board meeting, a general meeting, or both. Any Member is welcome at our board meetings on the first Wednesday of every month at the public safety building at

Funding was also discussed. Several possibilities

7:00 PM. — *George, K2CM*

BARA Shack Discussion

The BARA Shack was the major topic of discussion at the General Meeting. George, K2CM, introduced the matter and Ed, KB2SCF, provided a general overview of the discussion from the Board Meeting.

Our status on the Hilltop is clear: With no animosity towards the Club the Milks Heirs have exercised their right to cancel the lease and BARA will vacate the site by February 2003. Ron, AA2EQ, and Bill, N2BC, will begin to decommission the Site in early October.

With regard to a new site we have two choices. We can do nothing and become a Club without a Shack or we can view the situation as a temporary setback and investigate potential sites for a new Shack. A number of members rose to speak on this issue and the general view of the members present was that the Shack is part of our club identity and that we should work to find another site. The search will take time and it will likely be a while before we have a new Site and a new Shack, but the opinion of the members present was that the search should continue and a motion to that effect was made and carried.

George, K2CM, spoke at length on the possibility of forming a partnership with a municipal or other local government to provide assistance in developing an Emergency Communications Plan in return for an easement to use a site. Pros and cons of this approach were noted as was the possibility of purchasing property outright. The more possibilities that we investigate, the better the chance that we find an "ideal" location. All BARA Members are urged to keep their eyes open and to funnel any leads to the Officers and Board.

were noted, but in the discussion it became clear that

the members present were against any plan that would separate “shack” and “non-shack” members. The feeling is that if we build, we build for the Club and this resonates with the attitude that BARA has long held: The Shack is a resource for all.

It was recognized, though, that acquiring a Site, erecting a Shack, and installing the Antennas will be very expensive and cannot be covered by the BARA Treasury. Nor can it be covered by doubling (or even tripling) the dues. If we are to have a Shack then we — the Members of BARA — will have to raise the funds that make it possible.

We can expect to hear more about this subject as the search narrows to a “short list”, but fund-raisers and donations will be needed.

We have a long road ahead and it will take some time for our efforts to develop a new site that equals our present site on Milks Road, but as one member observed at the meeting: *BARA is all in this together!*

Notes From the General Meeting

The September General Meeting was lively and somewhat better attended than usual. We thank all members who were able to turn out and we look forward to seeing more old friends as the search for a new Shack Location unfolds.

The Constitutional Amendment to include BARA Officers in the composition of the BARA Board and to allow the them to vote on Board Matters was read for the third time, voted, and carried.

George, K2CM, reported that Ron, N2RWK, researched the easement for the WSKG Tower. He determined that the easement is for “walk in” activities and would be unsuited for any contesting activities or repeater siting at the site. In view of this news a motion was made to terminate the WSKG Tower Transfer and that motion was carried.

Ed, KB2SCF, remarked on the slate of candidates for Officers and Board Members that is being developed. It looks as if at least two slots may need to be filled and Ed urged any interested members to contact him so that he can place their names on the slate.

The August BARA Picnic

In the press of news surrounding the Shack Lease we neglected to report on the Club Picnic. Your Editor has whacked his head against the wall a few times over this and apologizes for his omission.

The weather could not have been more perfect. Not too hot, not too cool, and the mosquitos were — somewhere else — Ron, N2RWK, fired up the grill and the scent of charcoal mingled with the smell of burgers and fries and the hot dishes and potluck contributed by the Members.

It’s interesting to note that SK (didididahdidah) the

The Flea Market was sparse consisting of Elmer, N2PQX, who sold everything he had to offer to Ed, KB2SCF. Buyer and Seller were satisfied and it would be nice if all Hamfests were as successful.

Attendance was quite good. Paul, N2NCB, estimated it to be in the neighborhood of sixty Members, Spouses, Friends, Children, and Others. The food held out and there was plenty for all. As the sounds of munching gave way to satisfied sighs and the drone of conversation George, K2CM, convened a very brief Business Meeting. Then — with food, fellowship, and work complete — the crowd drifted into the sunset leaving only their footprints.

It All Started With Ham Radio

The Woz — Steve Wozniak — has left a mark on the world of Personal Computers that may never be eclipsed. Although the Apple may not be the biggest name in terms of sales and users, it was one of the — if not *the* — first and it has carved out a niche for itself. Many dedicated Apple users will have no other.

In 2002 Mr. Wozniak was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame and the Fall 2002 Issue of *American Heritage of Invention and Technology* devotes several pages to an interview with the man.

It’s worth reading the interview and several points are almost sure to resonate with us Hams. First, he was a tinkerer. Second, he read Tom Swift. Third, he laments the fading of Electronics as Computers ascend.

Mr. Wozniak’s words are worth hearing and his theme of tinkering and trying is one that we should carry forth and encourage. Radio, Television, and the Wireless World are here because of the dedicated efforts of Tinkerers and Experimenters. Armstrong didn’t come up with Regeneration, the Superhet, and FM by looking to *The Radio Designers Cookbook* for solutions nor did the pioneers who broke *Enigma* and *Purple* during World War II find their techniques in the *Standard Book of Algorithms*.

Innovation follows creation and although it may be grounded in lessons learned from the past it is driven by a quest for what might be. As Hams we should foster this growth and share our knowledge with each other and with others. More importantly, we should take time to introduce kids — and adults — to the magic behind the commonplace of Radio, Television, and Wireless.

SK, 30 and American Morse

radiotelegraph prosign for “end of transmission,

shutting down” has its roots in land line telegraphy where operators used the wire-code “30” to signify the “end of work.” This usage carried over to newspaper work where reporters ended their text with a “-30-” on the bottom of the last sheet of script so that the editor and printer would know that no sheets followed

How does this connect with radio? Well, land line telegraphy in the United States used the American Morse Code which differs slightly from the International Code used in radio work. Peculiarities of American Morse include the Long Dash (6 units) and the Extra Dash (9 units) as well as spacing within certain characters. The digit three in American Morse is didididahdit while zero consists of the extra long dash. If you put them together you get something that sounds very much like SK.

Other artifacts of American Morse are sometimes heard as trains approach stations. A Railroad Worker informs us that the pattern of blasts on the horn for some crossings is the American Morse representation for the Crossing Name.

Although Landline Telegraphers became quite proficient in American Morse and although it was used in radio communications on the Great Lakes until at least the 1920s, the peculiarities of the code make it unsuitable for use in radio where static tends to obliterate the spacing within letters as well as the long and short dashes. The International Code (actually adopted by European Telegraphic Administrations long before Radio was born) eventually became the standard and American Morse is heard only occasionally on the airwaves or in re-enactments of Wire Telegraphy.

Cables on a Shoestring

Sometimes a plain insulated black or grey cable just isn't what you want for that classic key, mike, or headset. If you have ever wanted to “dress it up” and make your connecting cable look like a real classic the solution may be just a shoestring away.

With a little bit of work it is possible to dress up a cable with a woven cloth cover and make it look special. The secret is realizing that many hiking bootlaces and woven synthetic ropes consist of a central core inside a woven cover. With a bit of care the core and cover can be separated and the cover slid over a shielded conductor of your choice.

The trick is to select a rope or bootlace that is somewhat larger in diameter than the cable you want to cover and to have some excess cable and rope to work with.

You have some leeway here as the weave can be opened or closed slightly in the process.

1. Strip off about two inches of the outer jacket of the

cable.

2. Snip off a bit from one end of the rope or lace. If the end has a tip attached or has been heated to prevent fraying you will want to cut off that part. Then go back an inch or so and use a sharp pair of scissors to cut through the outer covering to expose the core just as if you were preparing coax for a PL-259.

3. Fasten the inner core of the cable to the inner core of the rope. Make a smooth joint and use strong thread to bind tightly so the two pieces do not separate during the next steps.

4. Prepare the opposite end of the rope just as in step (2), but do not let the core slip inside the covering!

5. Work the woven covering of the rope down onto the cable. You can open up the weave carefully by working a bubble of cover from the far end of the rope down towards the cable. With a little work the weave will open up and the job will become easier as you go, but the covering will start to fray and unravel. This process is somewhat like opening the “Chinese Handcuffs” children get as party favors.

6. When the cable is covered, trim off the frayed threads, cut to length, and attach connectors. Use heat-shrink tubing to dress the ends.

There you have it: A neat and well-dressed cable. With a bit of imagination you can adapt this technique to various needs and applications.

Broome County ARES Net

Bill, KB2SIN, announces that the Net has moved to the first and third Sunday or each month at 1930 hours local time on the 146.820 Repeater. Please consider becoming a regular on this Net and becoming active in local ARES activities.

Operating and Other Events

16 OCTOBER: BARA GENERAL MEETING. 7:30 PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church next to Lourdes Hospital.

19 OCTOBER: JOTA (JAMBOREE ON THE AIR). Maine Town Park, Maine, NY. Contact Pete, KB2JGZ, or Howard, AA2CO.

20 OCTOBER: CHOW/CROP WALK, Endicott. Contact Ford Drake, AB2HS, if you can help out with communications for this event.

20 OCTOBER: BROOME COUNTY ARES NET, 7:30 PM on the 146.82 Repeater.

3 NOVEMBER: BROOME COUNTY ARES NET, 7:30 PM on the 146.82 Repeater.

13 NOVEMBER: 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, October 16th Unitarian Universalist Church
Hospital

Riverside Drive, Binghamton, Next to Lourdes

Board Meeting

7:00 PM, Wednesday November 5th
Broome Community College Campus, Office of Emergency Services (West Side of Campus)

Exam Session

7:00 PM Monday, October 28th
Vestal Public Library, Route 434 Vestal
1:30 PM, Saturday November 9th
Endicott Fire Station, Across from UE High School

BARA Dues

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