



# **BARA** Facts

*Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association*

*September 2004*

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

## **Bad News**

On Tuesday, 7 September the Town of Binghamton held an Informational Meeting on our request to use the Town Property on Hance Road. Unfortunately the meeting did not go well. Several of the nearby property owners in the immediate area objected and they mobilized support among their neighbors. The objections were the usual ranging from cell-phone and TV interference to our towers being an eyesore and a hazard to aviation. Although these objections could be met and argued on a reasonable level (and believe me we tried), there was a lot of emotion wrapped around the issue and reason did not make much headway.

More significantly, environmental concerns were raised and it was suggested that BARA would be responsible for any "mess" uncovered while excavating the foundations for our towers. Since the site is a former landfill with a soil cap it is unlikely, but not impossible that something might be uncovered while excavating and BARA certainly does not wish to assume responsibility for a mess created by someone else.

The Officers, Directors, and Members present at the meeting deserve thanks for their presentations and defense of our request. They worked hard in a difficult situation. A Public Hearing on the matter will be held on 21 September at 7:01 PM, but the situation is not very promising. — *Thanks to Bob, KC2DSS, and Paul, N2NCB, for the details in this report*

## **To Be Prepared**

This month we recall 9/11 and how the actions of a determined few disrupted this country and brought about the death of many thousands of innocence. But if death and destruction marked that day, sacrifice and dedication marked the response. Among the responders were many of our number and it seems appropriate to take a moment and consider our role in Emergency

And this is where we fit into the picture. As

Communications.

Ham Radio may well be the finest hobby in the world, but much though we enjoy our avocation, our purpose is much more than a Hobby or a Technical Challenge. There are reasons why Ham Radio is special, reasons that go beyond the pleasure of communicating with others, the excitement of DX, and the thrill of Radio. Those who are not familiar with Hams need to understand what sets us apart and we ourselves sometimes need a gentle reminder.

Communication is vital to our world. The flow of information permits resources to be moved where they are needed most and assistance to be rendered wherever required. From things as mundane as moving tires from a warehouse to a service station to crucial police, fire, and ambulance calls, our daily activities are supported by a network of communications. At times this system is slightly disrupted by weather and we feel some inconvenience and mild annoyance. At other times power failures, ice storms, floods, or hurricanes cause extended and more troubling disruptions. As Hams we are trained (and expected) to step into the breach and provide a backup for disrupted systems whenever needed. Today — with the possibility of terrorism very real and very present — the possibility and repercussions of such an event become more significant and require greater vigilance and preparation on our part.

It's true that technologies like cell-phones, personal wireless, the Internet, and cable television provide alternate paths to traditional wired and wireless systems, but these new technologies are also subject to failures and are themselves fully loaded in normal circumstances. Likewise, without a plan for integrating technologies into a functioning and interconnected system we are left with tools, but no abilities.

Amateur Radio Operators we have at least a passing

familiarity with various modes of communication, but — more importantly, we are not bound to a single path. Just having the ability to operate on HF and VHF bands immediately allows for local, regional, national, and international communications that can be integrated as quickly as you can say “Net Control”

That is significant. One of the lessons driven painfully home by 9/11 and other events is that while government and private agencies are able to communicate at the agency level, inter-communication between agencies can be difficult or even impossible. Incompatible equipment or protocols and the very nature of license grants to agencies tend to restrict wireless inter-communication because frequencies are assigned and often “locked”. Un-channelized Frequency Agility is not their norm. It is for us!

The nature of our resources is also significant: Government and Commercial users can literally pour money into their systems and use raw power to hold the solar gods and sprites of propagation at bay. On the other hand, a DXer (even one running the legal limit) has to know how to “work the bands” and squeeze the best advantage out of less than desirable conditions. In an emergency and under jury-rigged conditions our adaptability and resourcefulness might make the difference between communications and silence.

Herein is a key: agencies assemble at a known point and are dispatched as required. If communications fail, this process is disrupted. As Hams our first instinct is to troll the airwaves: to check the Emergency Frequencies and scan for the nets that form. As the networks form we can act from where we are or dispatch to wherever we are needed.

Insurance is something that the prudent person buys — not because he or she knows it will be needed, but because it might be needed. So it is with us: The “big one” may never happen, but if it does we will be needed (and needed badly). For that day (and may it never come), we must prepare.

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### *BARA Picnic 2004*

The BARA picnic and membership meeting was held on August 18, 2004 at the small pavilion at Ross Park. There were between forty and fifty persons in attendance. Included were many of the usual suspects and conspicuous by their presence were old friends and some new faces which I hope, by their continued appearance at BARA activities, will become old friends. It was first feared that the political gathering in the larger pavilion immediately adjacent to us would cause

QRM. But, unfortunately for the candidate, the BARA group outnumbered his group by at least two to one. Their interference was held to a minimum as his amplifier was backed off a bit and in turn we did not cause interference since we did not generate any RF this year. Various political entities made their entrance and exits through the BARA group rather than using the prescribed circumnavigation path. Did anyone notice? They hoped you did.

The grill work of the first year SIT (spatula in training), although most acceptable and appreciated, was not yet fine tuned to the discriminating taste buds of the BARA palate which has been trained by years of culinary picnic grill excellence.

The lasagna was excellent. Ah, those deviled eggs; the salads, yum. The ice cold shrimp, the lobster tails. What do you mean you didn't get any lobster. Ooops, maybe that was for the political pavilion. All the usual picnic stuff. Cookies, cookies, cookies were available everywhere — just like in your CPU. At least president Bob didn't have to package up two or three six foot subs like that other group did. Speaking of president Bob, he did a yeoman's task at set up, grilling and excess asset removal. His tasks were made a bit easier by most everyone pitching in to make the evening run smoothly.

It was a wonderful, almost summer type, evening. Good food. Good companionship. Stories about radio, kids, grandkids and pets. Tales about contacts made and contacts missed many of which sounded like fish stories to me. Discussion about “Lucky Hill” an 1,800 foot precipice near the anticipated BARA transmission site that allegedly was used as an impact point for artillery practice shot from the Choconut, PA area during one of the big wars. (There is a story in there somewhere). 'Twas a shame there were some members absent. But then again, our trusty trustee made his annual appearance while the city EMT/HAM dropped down for a rare sighting a few words and most minimal calorie intake.

As we enjoyed the summer evening someone had to raise concern about the thickening ICE. Oh, that was Hedy worried about her later evening skating in Elmira. She exited early and missed some of the fun.

I made no attempt to list the calls of the attendees for I know I would miss some and screw up others. So, not wanting more than the usual amount of persons irritated with me I elected (that time of year) not to make the attempt. But, some picnic pictures have been placed on the W2OW YAHOO Reflector site (not the club website). Hope you can get to them; I haven't.

Those of you who weren't at the picnic, you missed another good BARA time. — Jack, WB2GHH

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### Ham Radio Coffeeklatch

Phil, N2BEE, informs us that there is an informal Ham Radio get-together every Wednesday evening at 7:00 PM at the Skylark Diner in Vestal (next to the Vestal Public Library). Anyone who would like to join in for a round of Ham Radio, Boatanchor, Repair, and general conversation is welcome to stop by.

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### Empire State Games: Thanks

*The following is a communication to BARA received from Bob, KD2IM, and Paula, N2FDA, Brackett the Empire State Games Amateur Radio Coordinators. We reproduce it with only minor editing because everyone who participated deserves to be recognized for their dedication, sacrifice, and flexibility in pulling off this event.*

...This was a great year for the games in regard to the support from the amateur community. Ninety-One volunteers either worked the events or provided communications support for the Games and many of these came from the BARA group. That number of hams allowed us to cover all of the contact venues and most of the non-contact venues.... The hams volunteering this year came from all across New York — from Long Island to the Buffalo area. We even had a couple of 3-calls providing coverage.

The local committee put long hours into planning, scheduling, and researching the venue locations for coverage. In particular, we would like to thank Steve Hanzlik, K2CDJ, and Dorothy Hanzlik, K2YEH, the local co-chairs for their untiring efforts to make the games a success.

The SVARA group with Ford Drake, AB2HS, leading the charge made sure that the repeater coverage was well prepared. *[Brian Adey, K2DLB, spent long hours behind the scenes installing equipment and testing coverage.]* Jack Smith, KB2YEN, helped with scheduling and along with Jack Connors, WB2GHH, sorted out directions to the venues. More time was spent preparing than we can begin to recognize here but

suffice it to say, we thank you for all your fine work, it really paid off.

Thanks also to the people who prepared and handed out packets on Tuesday and Wednesday, Especially Dorothy Hanzlik, K2YEH, Sharon Drake, N2WGM, and Jack Smith, KB2YEN, who headed up the effort. *[There were others helping, but things were so busy that their names were not recorded.]*

[There were many changes] in the schedules, both before the games and during the games. We really appreciate those who were agreeable when asked to change their schedules and for those who stepped up to take the open times we had. Many factors, from teams that dropped out to weather that wouldn't cooperate, provided a non-stop challenge. But, you were flexible and that's what it takes to make it all work.

Hams this year ranged from 14 years all the way to — well, we won't say. But all did a great job in putting in hours under conditions not always favorable.

In fact, some got pretty wet!

There were two hams who came up from the Poughkeepsie club (the games will be [held in the Hudson valley] next year) and put in two full days of coverage. They were coached by some of this year's committee so that they may prepare for next year. My thanks to Steve and Ford for helping them to prepare.

All in all, you fellows (and ladies) showed that the BARA group along with SVARA knows how to make the communications for the largest public service event in New York State a success! I only wish we had this kind of support from all the areas that host the games.

I don't know who belongs to which club so I say thank you for all your help and if I have left someone out, please do not take offense. We really appreciate the efforts of all who participated.

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### November Elections

Coincident with the Local and National Elections in November BARA will conduct an Election of Officers and Board Members at the General Meeting on 17 November.

All BARA Members are reminded that nominations for Officers and Directors in the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association are open and that persons interested in serving should contact Paul, N2NCB, or Bob, KC2DSS, before the November General Meeting. If you are interested in serving, but unsure of what is required, please feel free to come to one of the Board Meetings to get an idea of how our organization runs and to get answers to any questions

you might have. The Board Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Office of Emergency Services in the Broome County Public Safety Building (behind BCCC) and all members are welcome to attend.

Club Officers and Committees			
President	Bob McCabe	KC2DSS	748-9808
Vice President	Ron Reagan	N2RWK	722-6790
Secretary	Allen Lutins	KC2KLC	729-4817
Treasurer	Paul Slocum	N2NCB	687-2057
Directors	Bob Handel	K2FU	693-4310
	Malcolm Heath	KC2EOV	753-7248
	Steve Orzelek	N2MSB	775-0281
	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, September 15th Town of Binghamton Town  
Entrance

Hall, 279 Park Avenue, South of the Ross Park

### ***Board Meeting***

7:00 PM, Wednesday October 6th  
Broome Community College Campus, Office of Emergency Services (West Side of Campus)

### ***Exam Session***

7:00 PM Monday, September 27th  
Vestal Public Library, Route 434 Vestal  
1:30 PM, Saturday October 9th  
Endicott Fire Station, Across from UE High School

### ***BARA Dues***

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

### ***DX Cluster***

W2OW on 145.070 MHz with a Data Rate of 1,200 baud; questions to [n2bc@stny.rr.com](mailto:n2bc@stny.rr.com)

### ***W2OW Repeater***

147.390 MHz, 100 Hz CTSS. BRAT Net every Sunday Evening at 8:00 PM Local Time

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

*First Class*

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