

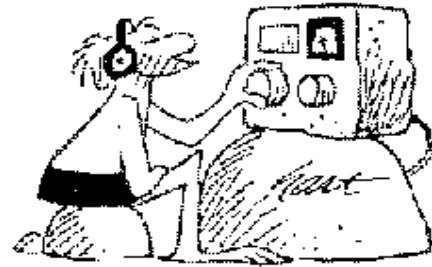


Binghamton Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

PO Box 853

Binghamton, NY 13902

Established 1919



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W2OW Fred W. Porterfield Memorial Station

W2OW Repeater 147.39/.99

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Its official - Hamfest '95 was a success!

My thanks to the tons of people who worked so very hard to produce a real winner. As I type this the "share repayments" are going out in the mail. Paul, N2NCB, will have the official figures very soon. Last year we took the profit and held it as "seed money" for the next year's Hamfest. Following that same line of logic Hamfest '96 will have a bigger seed to start with due to the profit being added from this year's effort.

Along the lines of Hamfest - BARA, is Hamfest STARC!

Remember a while back we voted to "absorb" STARC and three of our members volunteered to get elected as STARC officers? That has happened! Dick, KB2LDY, Rob, WB3IOU, and Gay, KB2OXA have picked up that ball and were elected as the new STARC officers.

What's the plan now? Two Hamfests a year? Do the "STARC" fest only? Do the BARA fest on the traditional May STARC date at the airport? Lots of possibilities and opportunities here folks! And a lot of WORK! We can get some first hand reviews from Dick et al on what they see at "Ground Zero" and listen to their ideas and recommendations at the September club meeting. I am excited to see what they see come up with.

I really urge you to come to the meeting to hear the latest so you, the BARA membership, can determine what direction we will ultimately go in. Please give this some thought and let the officers know what you think.

Another important item coming up is the BARA COFFEE BREAK. It is the ONE single fund-raiser for the general treasury that we are doing this year. It is scheduled for the weekend of September 23rd and 24th from 7 AM to 7PM each day. It is at the I-81 Southbound exit North of Whitney Point (where SVARA just held theirs over labor day). I am leading the effort. Please give me a

call at home (748-4387) if you can help over a particular time slot on either day. As of right now the single thing needed most is an enclosed pickup truck for hauling stuff. I already have lots of strong large tarps etc to keep things shaded and dry.

A final note - this month's program is a HOMEBREW, er, I mean it about Homebrew, er, I mean it's a Homebrew show put on about Homebrew projects, er...the heck with it!

Joe Pisani, N2XYR, supported by several other "addicted" homebrew types, is putting on a "Hey - you can really do this!" show for us - especially those of us who couldn't tell plate modulation from eating with your mouth full!

See you at the meeting!

de Ron, AA2EQ

BARA 'HAMFEST '95

The August 19, 1995 BARA Hamfest held at Miller Aviation was, in a word, SUCCESSFUL. Some stats of the hamfest---

- Picture perfect wx.(remember last year?)
- 750 paid attendance
- Over 100 tables sold
- 9 vendors
- Over 80 folks in the flea market selling their wares.

Included in the success, of course, means that BARA also made a profit. So to those shareholders that put up the necessary funds to kick this hamfest off, by the time you read this, you should have received your check or the 'check is in the mail'.

The final results have not been completed, but I hope to be able to report them by the next general meeting (a good excuse to get out of the house and find out 9/20).

As you all may know, to pull off a hamfest is not an easy task. it takes a considerable amount of time, effort, money, and cooperation not to mention willpower to have a good hamfest.

On behalf of all the '95' BARA hamfest committee members, I would like to take this opportunity to say a big - THANK YOU - to all that made their contribution before, during and after the hamfest to make it a successful one in more way than just the dollars.

de Paul N2NCB

COFFEE BREAK

The club's 1995 fund-raiser is scheduled for 6AM to 7PM on Saturday September 23 and Sunday September 24 up at the Whitney Point rest area, Southbound on I81.

Ron, AA2EQ is heading things up and needs volunteers to 'person' our table, make coffee, socialize with the visitors, spread goodwill about amateur radio, etc.

Contact Ron at home 748-4387 or at the September meeting to sign up for a time slot!!

DO YOU COME TO MEETINGS ???

No, why not? Attendance at the general meetings is declining - overall membership in the club has been gradually climbing What gives?

Come to the September meeting - it's easy to find, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, at the intersection of Route 201 and Route 17C . We're looking for ways to improve the meetings - things that will cause YOU to attend.

If you have ideas, see me at the meeting, or give me a call at 748-5232. 73, Bill WF2A

REPEATER NEWS

The repeater codes published a couple months back are all working. Those of you that still use the 3-digit exchange codes (these were listed on a little business sized card handed out ages ago). NO LONGER NEED TO USE THEM!!

While the 3-digit exchange codes do indeed still work, they will soon be disabled. This will be announced here in BARA FACTS before it happens.

If you are not familiar with the 3-digit exchange codes, don't worry! You don't need them.

HOWZ UR DUZE ?

In case you haven't noticed... The bottom part of the mailing label contains a line that says:

CLUB DUES: MM/YY

That's when your membership needs to be renewed.

SHACK UPDATE

Bob Mess WS2U is looking for volunteers to part with a few \$\$'s.... Bob is leading the effort to perform some badly needed repairs on the shack.

Bob already has personally obtained a new entry door and commitments to purchase a couple of new windows.

The grand plan calls for all new windows, insulation, new siding (we have enough for the 2 ends), new wiring, and new interior walls. Quite a challenge!

See Bob if you would like to contribute a window (\$80), some siding (\$20/sheet), insulation (\$15/roll), sheetrock (\$5/sheet), or a nail (\$.01?).

We've been working on this for over a year - so there's no great rush, but we're running out of nice weather for 1995!

NOVEMBER ARRL SWEEPSTAKES.

Bob WS2U and Frank N2HR are putting together a team to compete in the November Sweepstakes. The contest runs from 4PM Saturday November 18 through 10PM Sunday November 19. Sweepstakes is a 30 hour contest and we would like to involve as many people as possible. The hardest time slots to fill are the overnight times. If you've never contested up on the hill (W2OW site) you could be in for a big treat.

Mark it on your calender and sign up for a time slot. At the November meeting we will have a demonstration of the computer program that we will be using during the contest.

Check out October 1995 QST, page 125 for all the details on the contest.

This will also be a great opportunity for some of our "Veteran" testers to pass on some of their expertise to some of us kids. See you at the meeting

de Bob WS2U.

NOBODY TALKS TO ME!

From QST Magazine - 10/93 By Steve Ford, WB8IMY Assistant Technical Editor

All revved up and no place to go. You know the feeling . . . and so do I. You just unpacked your first 2-meter FM transceiver and you're dying to use it.

You punch in the frequency of the local repeater and listen. Silence. This is the moment of truth. You key the microphone and, in your most confident voice, announce, "WB8IMY listening."

The repeater transmits for a few seconds, then stops. Surely someone is reaching for their microphone. They'll call you in just a few seconds . . . won't they? The seconds stretch into minutes. "WB8IMY listening," you announce again, this time with added urgency.

Still nothing.

Again the lonely minutes pass. Maybe you just picked a bad time. You'll try again in an hour or so. As you reach for the POWER switch, the repeater suddenly comes to life.

"WB8ISZ this is WB8SVN. You around, Dave?"

"WB8SVN from WB8ISZ. I'm here. Did you just get off work?" Now you feel a new emotion--anger! It's a safe bet that one of these two guys were listening before. Why didn't they answer you? Is it because you're a new ham?

The Shy Communicators Hams pride themselves on their ability to communicate, yet there is an odd contradiction: many hams are painfully shy! If you don't believe this, go to any hamfest. Chances are, you'll see hams whose call signs you recognize--hams who are constantly chattering on the local repeaters. So why are these same hams wandering around so quietly? When you approach them, why do they seem so ill at ease and reluctant to talk?

The answer lies in the nature of Amateur Radio itself. With the exception of visual modes such as ATV, no one can see you when you're on the air. You could be holding a conversation with someone while wearing little more than your underwear. They'd never know! In other words, ham radio allows us to hold the world at arms length while still maintaining contact. It acts as a filter and a shield for those who are uncomfortable with close, personal communications.

Breaking through the shyness barrier to communicate with a stranger is difficult. Think back to your school days. When the teacher asked for student volunteers for a project, why did you hesitate? Perhaps you wanted to see if anyone else was willing to join you. No one wants to be the first to raise their hand! A similar situation occurs on repeaters. When you announced that you were listening, a dozen people may have heard you. No one recognized your call sign, though. You're a stranger, an unknown. It's as though the teacher just got on the repeater and asked for volunteers to speak to you. Who will be the first to step forward?

For many hams, the familiar line of reasoning is, "Hmmm . . . I don't know this guy. What would I say to him? Nah . . . I'll wait. I'm sure someone else will give him a call." The problem is, when all the hams on the repeater feel this way, no one replies!

And so it goes on repeaters throughout the country. The problem isn't you per se, it's that fact that you're a stranger. So how do you make the transition from stranger to friend?

Breaking the Ice If you keep announcing that you're "listening," someone is bound to come back to you eventually. This could take a long time--especially if you're trying to start a conversation during less popular hours. To really break the ice and shed your "stranger" label, you need to assert yourself on the air. That is, you need to become part of an existing conversation. Listen to the repeater during the early morning and late afternoon. That's when it's likely to be used the most. As you hear stations talking to each other, listen for an opportunity to

contribute something--even if it's just a question. Let's say that you find two hams discussing computers . . .

"KR1S from WR1B. Well, I'm definitely going to pick up some extra memory at the show tomorrow. I figure I need at least 2 megabytes."

"I don't know, Larry. I think 4 megabytes would be a better choice for the kind of software you're running."

Even if you don't own a computer, I bet you can think of a question that will give you an excuse to join the conversation. In the pauses between their transmissions, announce your call sign.

"WB8IMY"

"Well, there's a new voice. Ah . . . WB8IMY . . . I think it was . . . this is KR1S. How can I help you?"

"Hello. My name is Steve and I live in Wallingford. I'm thinking about buying a computer for my Amateur Radio station, but I'm a little confused. You guys seem knowledgeable. Can you give me a recommendation?"

Perfect! Stroking a person's ego is the best way to get them talking. With luck, these fellows will be more than happy to show off their expertise. Just keep the questions and comments coming.

If you engage in enough of these conversations on the same repeater, you'll gradually melt through the shyness barrier. In time, your call sign will be as familiar as any other. When you say, "WB8IMY listening," you'll have a much better chance of getting a response. After all, they'll know you.

Getting Involved Another way to establish yourself is to become involved in club activities. Look for a local club that's active in public-service events. Attend the meetings regularly and be prepared to volunteer whenever they ask for help.

Don't worry about your lack of experience in public-service operating. Believe me, it isn't that difficult. You'll be told exactly what to do and, in most cases, a experienced ham will be nearby.

My first public-service activity was a canoe race in my home town of Dayton, Ohio. I was the new face in the club and I was new to ham radio. When they asked for volunteers, it took a great deal of courage to raise my hand. Boy, am I glad I did! The race organizers needed "checkers" at various points along the river. It was our task to make sure that each canoe passed our checkpoint safely. I was stationed with my FM transceiver at an isolated rural bridge over the Miami river. As each canoe passed beneath me, I checked it off my list and relayed the information to the net-control station. The sun was shining, a gentle breeze was blowing through the trees and I felt terrific! Here I was, an Amateur Radio operator, doing an important job with my fellow team members.

After the race, we all met at a local pizza restaurant and swapped stories. Someone asked if I wanted to be part of the communications team for the March of Dimes walk-a-thon the following weekend. Why not? After participating in several public-service events, everyone knew me by name and call. There was never a shortage of someone to talk to on the repeater.

Some Tips to Try If you announce that you're "listening" and no one responds, wait and try again a few minutes later. You'll have better luck during the commuting hours in the morning and afternoon. And don't forget about the shyness factor. If no one replies, it's not that they don't like you, they just don't know you.

Try asking for a signal report rather than simply stating that you're "listening." A report request gives an otherwise shy ham an extra incentive to call you.

Join a club that's active in public-service activities. Volunteer for as many events as possible. Active contest clubs are also good prospects. Offer your time to assist in several major contests at the club station.

September 1995

Whatever you do, don't let social fears keep you from enjoying Amateur Radio to its fullest. If the locals are too shy to talk to you, reach out and contact them. You'll both benefit from the experience!