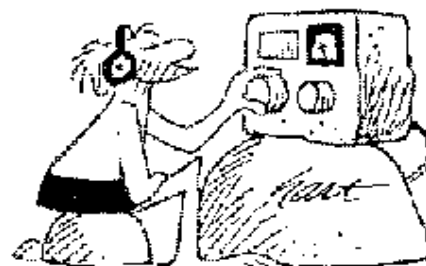


# **BARA** FACTS



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**

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

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

The stress of the long presidential campaign put me in the hospital. I pause and think what could have happened if I had an opponent.

I understand I missed an excellent dinner meeting. I'm so glad that our guests were able to attend and have a relaxed evening. I want to thank the BARA leadership - and general membership - for a productive year in 1999. A number of very successful activities which resulted in the continuation of positive public exposure of BARA and amateur radio activities in the Binghamton area. Your individual efforts, and sacrifices combined to make 1999 a functional and financial success and carried on the BARA tradition.

Special thanks to our past president, Ed Plesnar KB2SCF, for providing the much needed planned guidance, direction and judication of discussions at board and general membership meetings. His monotone approach kept the lid (pun) on a number of situations. I look forward to Ed's continued active participation and counsel during the year 2000.

With respect to this, the last year of the millennium, what has BARA planned and how will it be executed? The January meeting operating budget review will give a hint as to plans. Your comment, input and subsequent participation will assure proper execution. I'm personally looking forward to an active, fun filled year. Come to the meeting, make IT happen.

CU on the radio.

Jack WB2GHH

## **ELECTION 2000**

The election committee was ready, there was a last minute call for candidates - It was indeed tense as the members assembled at the December meeting all avoided eye contact. OK, it wasn't quite that bad... there

were no speeches, no debates. Just a quick acclimation of the 2000 officers by vote of the assembled members.

Check out the last page of the newsletter to see the 2000 officer corps.

## **HOT NEWS**

### **RESTRUCTURING HAS ARRIVED!**

The FCC has finally handed down its Report and Order regarding Revisions to Part 97. On December 22, 1999 the Report was adopted and on December 30, 1999 it was made public. In forty-one pages the Commission summarized its findings based on over 2,250 Comments and Reply Comments. The sheer number of Comments is remarkable and a careful reading of the Report confirms that the Commissioners tried to balance the competing views contained in the comments against the stated purposes of Amateur Radio, the requirements of international treaties, and the changing technology of wireless communication.

The Report and Order takes effect on April 15, 2000 and the most significant changes are summarized below.

Beginning in April only three classes of Amateur Radio License will be issued by the FCC. The entry Class -- Technician -- will be earned by passing a single written examination. The second Class -- General -- will require an additional written test plus a five word-per-minute Morse Code examination. The third and highest Class -- Amateur Extra -- will require only an additional written examination. Privileges for these classes will align with privileges for the corresponding classes today. No restructuring of the Amateur Bands will occur. Existing Technician, General, and Amateur Extra Licensees will retain their current grade and privileges and existing Novice, Technician-Plus, and Advanced Licensees will retain their grade and privileges and will be permitted to renew their licenses, however no new licenses will be

issued for the Novice, Technician-Plus, and Advanced classes.

In the FCC Database holders of the current Technician-Plus class will be listed as "Technician" and are well-advised to retain documentation (CSEC or FCC issued License demonstrating that the five word-per-minute code exam was passed) to prove HF privileges. Licensees who were documented as having the Technician Class before March 21, 1987 will be able to upgrade to the General Class without any further examination by presenting proof that the Technician grade was earned before March 21, 1987 to an accredited VE Team and paying the appropriate Application Fee. (Please note: before March 21, 1987 the Technician grade required the licensee to previously earn a non-renewable Novice license requiring a written examination and a five word-per-minute code test and to pass the written portion of the General Class examination. It was, therefore an intermediate grade and not an entry grade as in the current structure.)

Doubtless these changes will generate some controversy, however this will not be the first time that the Amateur Radio Service has seen sweeping changes. A review of the history of our Service will reveal that this is not the first time that the Code Requirement has changed nor is it the first time that the Advanced grade has been "on hold". What is remarkable in the Report are the pains that the FCC has taken to outline the rationale for these changes and the number of Comments (supporting and opposing each issue) that are directly quoted or footnoted. Regarding the Code Requirement alone almost ten pages of text and footnotes summarize the arguments and conclude that although a demonstration of Morse Code proficiency is required by International Treaty five words-per-minute has been acceptable for the Novice bands since 1951 and should be sufficient for access to all Amateur bands. If we recall that the original purpose for any Morse Code requirement was to assure that an Amateur station would understand Commercial and Government transmissions indicating that the Amateur station was interfering with official, commercial, or distress traffic and when we consider that Commercial and Government stations are phasing out the Morse mode in normal operations than this decision becomes understandable albeit debatable in Amateur circles. The FCC definitely noted that Morse Telegraphy is extensively used on the Amateur Bands, but concluded that there was no need to incorporate additional Morse requirements in Government regulations. It also noted that a single minimum speed requirement would eliminate the problem of the abuse of Handicapped Exemptions for the present thirteen and twenty word-per-minute examinations.

In other areas the FCC agreed that Advanced Class Licensees should be permitted to prepare and administer Technician and General Class examinations. They also determined that there was no pressing need for special RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) licenses and concluded that these licenses will be permitted to lapse. Several pages discuss the issue of Amateur Radio Exams, the structure of the tests, and the content of the question pools. In these matters the FCC has by and large placed responsibility for defining the technical qualifications for holding an Amateur Radio License and the content of an Amateur Radio License Exam on the shoulders of the Amateur Radio Community -- a continuation of our long tradition of policing our own ranks.

Certainly these are sweeping changes and certainly they mean "An End to Amateur Radio As We Know It", but then every change to the Amateur Radio Service has meant the same thing. Do these changes represent a "dumbing down" of Amateur Radio? Time alone will tell, but our response to these changes and how we integrate these changes and the Operators who come into our Service under these new regulations will do more to shape the face of Amateur Radio than the text of Part 97. Unlike Incentive Licensing nobody loses privileges under the Restructuring and because the FCC declined to integrate "obsolete" licenses into the new structure nobody gains "unearned" privileges on April 15, 2000.

Copies of the Report and Order can be downloaded in Adobe or Text format from the ARRL at <http://www.arrl.com/news/restructuring/> or from the FCC Daily Digest at [http://www.fcc.gov/Daily\\_Releases/Daily\\_Digest/1999/dd991230.html](http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Digest/1999/dd991230.html) (for Word Perfect format see <http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Wireless/Orders/1999/fcc99412.wp> ).

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## 1999 HOLIDAY PARTY

The 1999 BARA Christmas Party at Russell's was a smash as always. Hedy, AA2MU, pulled together a fine get-together and the Prizes included Antenna "parts", Books, Gift Certificates, and Poinsettias. The food and service were even better than in past years and the new location is open and comfortable. It certainly was a night of fun and Christmas Cheer and the company could not be beat.

Before moving to the business of the evening the club presented two members with the "BARA Award". The President and the Board felt that the long and unselfish service of Paul Slocum, N2NCB, and Elmer Shafer, N2PQX, should be recognized and acknowledged by the Club.

Paul has been Treasurer for many years and is one of the moving forces behind our annual Hamfest. His careful attention to financial matters has helped to keep the club solvent and on an even financial keel and his efficient and friendly management of the STAR and BRAT Nets have provided forums for many new hams to make themselves known to our Amateur Community. The look on Paul's face when his name was announced was priceless.

As Secretary Elmer has been a regular fixture at our meetings and at Board Meetings in particular his advice and attention to detail are particularly valuable. Our club history is recorded in Elmer's books and the complete detail there has helped to resolve many questions in the past. Elmer is also one of the Hamfest leaders and he is certainly one of the "regulars" that makes that event happen. Because Elmer was not able to attend the party his award will be presented at the next possible meeting.

Our Guests of Honor -- Bill, W2MTA, Thompson and his wife Betty were feted with style. Bill was presented with a plaque noting his service as ARRL Section Manager for Western New York and an album of "Radio-grams" from his friends. Bill's long service to Amateur Radio is appreciated and BARA was pleased to make him welcome and to wish him well for the future.

With dinner and celebration over we moved on to the matter of the Election of Club Officers. There was a call for nominations from the floor and since none were forthcoming and since there was but one candidate for each position there was then a motion that the slate of Candidates be accepted as read and that the Candidates be declared elected. This motion was seconded and passed by a show of hands. The BARA Officers for the year 2000 are therefore:

President	Jack Connors, WB2GHH
Vice President	Rick Melton, N3VKM
Secretary	Elmer Shafer, N2PQX
Treasurer	Paul Slocum, N2NCB
Directors	Hedy Clothier, AA2MU
	Bill Coleman N2BC
	Ron Regan, N2RWK
	Tom Tefft, W2TRT

The elections were followed by prize drawings and a 50-50 and the party then broke up with all well-fed, talked out, and tired.

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## SILENT KEY

We record with sadness that former BARA President, Roger A. Walker, became a silent key on January 3, 2000. Roger was president in the later half of the 1960s and was instrumental in the installation of the 'last' wooden derrick type tower which was placed to the immediate west of the shack. He was a vocal, forceful influence on club activities during this period. Roger was a retired employee of NYSE&G. GHH

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## TIP-O-THE HAT

If you bump into George Allen, K2CM, make sure you say 'THANKS!'

George recently donated an ICOM IC-735 HF transceiver, a personal computer, and a vintage receiver to the club.

The ICOM and the PC establish a second operating position up on the hilltop. The receiver was 'turned into' \$\$ and was the anonymous \$400 donation a few months ago.

It took a good bit of arm twisting, but I was able to get George to 'fess up to his good deeds! THANKS GEORGE!

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## JANUARY PROGRAM

With the exciting news of license restructuring, we are planning a session to kick around the facts. We'll lay out the new license classes, the new test element structures, and how you can take advantage of a unique window of opportunity from now until April 15, 2000.

We will also be 'testing the water' to see if there is interest in forming a 5WPM code class. It's easier than ever to gain those HF privileges!

See you at the meeting!