

# **BARA** Facts

*Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association*

*November 2001*

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

## **President's Corner**

I took advantage of the last warm days to investigate the very high SWR on the TA-33 Mosley antenna system. I decided to drop (not the correct word), lower the antenna from the 30 foot tower. My attempt was almost thwarted when I tried to put on my safety belt.

You know, it shrank. Just hang it up for a few years and see what happens. But, with a wiggle or three and a couple of well spaced grunts and groans, I was able to secure the belt around my 34 inch waist. Now you know the impression I have of myself.

Up the tower with all 'the stuff' I needed in a bucket attached to the rear of my belt. Secured a carabinere on the mast above the antenna to act as a pivot point through which a looped 3/8 inch Nylon rope was attached to the mid point of the TA-33. Cut the coax back and attempted to loosen the "U" bolts. One had broken at the mast plate nut interface during the last 35 years in the air (the assumed cause for the antenna wind milling). The other broke as I tried to loosen it. With a couple pushes and pulls the antenna mast plate was worked loose of the home brew thrust bearing (wheel bearing and washer forced down a twelve foot section of iron pipe about four feet) that it impacted over time and I started the antenna in a controlled decent. Then oops. The coax to the higher two antennas on the tower was so placed that the antenna boom passed between them and the tower mast. So I had to gingerly lower the antenna, tilt it until I could reach the reflector element, and remove it to allow the boom to slide out from between the coax cables and the mast. And to think I never uttered any nasty words. Honestly.

The on ground inspection found the TA-33 to be in good shape. An element was removed for inspection easily. The original 1954 assembler (Vince W3HGS), must have used 'that goop' (Oxi-gard, Nylox (sic) etc.) which is conductive and prevents the antenna aluminum

All BARA members get a second chance to vote this November! Election of club officers for 2002 will be at

sections from seizing. The 'traps' were so well constructed that I gave up trying to uncover one for fear of damage. Ran a SWR scan on the TA-33 and it passed.

Up the tower again, this time to attach a dummy load to the coax. Ran a few tests and found the SWR terrible. I wanted to replace the coax with new RG213 coax but couldn't find any in the immediate area. I was forced (last GUD WX day) to use a 75 foot hank of RG8U that I had laying around coupled with and a ten foot piece of RG213 that I used as a pig tail from the antenna. Gooped things up and left them over night to dry, etc.

The next day was a real problem. Fifteen MPH winds with gusts to 25 MPH. The forecast was for worse weather in future days. I made a decision to get it back up, NOW. I knew I couldn't count on anti gravity to help me so I enlisted the assistance of a healthy thirty year old male to do the ground rope and pull work while I did the top work. With some young muscle the beam was raised but I had a trying time getting it from vertical to horizontal and then inserting the new "U" clamps. The best was yet to come. When I tightened down the hardware (from the blind side) the antenna was still loose. I had taken up all the threads on the "U" bolts. I loosened the nuts and discovered that the mast plate thickness was decreased by about twenty thousands as a result of the grating effect of long term wind milling against the iron pipe antenna mast. What to do? I reached into my tool bucket and the only thing I came up with was the broken pieces of the original "U" bolts. I used them as shims (temporarily of course) between the new bolts and mast. What the hey. Good for another 35 years. P.S. This time I did use some nasty words.

Just another couple days in the life of a retired person who happens to be a HAM. DE WB2GHH

## **Election of Officers**

the November general meeting, November 21, 2001. It's not too late to enter the race! As of now (Nov. 12) the

candidates are:

President: ..... George Allen, K2CM  
Vice President: ..... Bob McCabe, KC2DSS  
Secretary: ..... Ed Krymowski, NE2W  
Treasurer: ..... Paul Slocum, N2NCB  
Directors (4): ..... Bob Handel, K2FU  
                                    Ed Plesnar, KB2SCF  
                                    Ron Reagan, N2RWK  
                                    Mel Snitchler, WE2K

The election will follow the business meeting on  
November 21, 2001. DE Bill, N2BC

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### **December Christmas Party**

BARA Social Director Hedy, AA2MU, has lined up Russell's Steak and Seafood House (formerly the Surf and Turf) on Main Street in Endicott, across from the Enjoi Golf Course for our Annual Christmas party. The date is Wednesday December 19 with a Cocktail Hour between 5:30 and 6:30 and Dinner Orders starting about 6:30. We should be enjoying the great food by 7:00.

A copy of the banquet menu is included with this issue of the newsletter. If you know you will be attending please call Hedy at 748-4387 and leave a message on the answering machine or let one of the board members know.

It's a busy time of year for all of us so please call if you can so that Hedy and the board members won't have to call to see who will be attending. We need to give Russell's a final number by December 17th. Russell's is really great about giving us separate checks which makes it convenient (no need to pre pay!) They are also really good at making room for one more so if think you can't come and change your mind at the last minute, give Russell's a call and tell them to add one more to the party. They will also prepare meals within the guidelines of the American Heart Association if you give them a call in advance.

If you have any items that can be used for door prizes please contact Hedy. In the past, we have had donations of crafts and Tupperware and since non-Ham spouses are usually present Ham-free prizes are very welcome!

Remember, this year the elections will be held at the November meeting so the Christmas Party is strictly for fun. So mark your calendar for a great time and great food!

What a great weekend! We promised Didier we would get over 1.5 million points and we did ending the contest with over 1.6 million points and just under 1200 QSO's. Operating during the contest were Jerry, KG2FY;

DE Hedy AA2MU

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### **Contest Report**

The CQWW phone contest was a success and the last weekend in October was a great weekend to be at the shack. A big thank you to, Ron, AA2EQ, for taking down the home station and putting it up the shack and then doing it again in reverse 48 hours later! Thanks also to Bill, N2BC for networking the computer and setting up the contest program. Ron and Bill also did some fine tuning at the antenna farm on Thursday afternoon.

We had several firsts on the hilltop that weekend: By Thursday evening at 10:30 PM the shack was ready for contesting. When the contest started on Friday at 8:00 PM we were on the air and everything was working! No debugging, no frustration, no kidding!

This BARA Trailer Court was full. George, K2CM, brought up his big travel home. Ron, AA2EQ brought up the big green machine and he and Hedy camped in the back in winter camping bags with the two beagles, Natalie and Opal Jane (OJ). It got so warm they had to open the windows! George was first into the shack the next morning, but only because Natalie decided that no camping trip is complete unless you have a sick dog to take care of.

We also had an International Guest. Didier, F5MNH/W2 arrived with Ray K1OW. Ray is a club member and brought Didier to contest for a few hours. Well, their few hours turned into more than twenty-four. At some point Ray and Dider decided to stay until we broke a million points. And they did: on Sunday morning just as Ron was wandering into the shack at about 9:30.

The Shack was snug inside with all three rooms in use. Two were running as W2OW contest stations and the third was set up with George's ICOM 756. For use when the other two rooms were occupied and you wanted to contest with your own call.

There was only had one emergency call to N2BC. On Saturday night, after 10 PM, the computers decided not to log together. Bill pulled himself away from a ball game to come to the rescue. We thought we had lost about 40 QSOs, but in the end nothing was lost and we let Bill go home.

Jack, WB2GHH; Bill, NK2H; Bob, K2FU; Ray, K1OW; Bill, N2NC, George, K2CM; Ron, AA2EQ; Didier, F5MNH/W2; and Hedy, AA2MU. The points could have been higher if we didn't socialize quite so much, but that

is part of the fun of contesting at the shack.

Didier was very impressed with the shack. He couldn't believe the room we have for antennas. AA2EQ tried to pull a fast one so Didier could get a picture of Hedy waking up in the back of the truck, but even half asleep she was smart enough to avoid the camera!

We hope everyone who was at the shack had a great time. If you missed this contest there are more coming up and (weather permitting) we can do it again in the spring. Remember, the shack is there for you to use any time. DE Hedy AA2MU

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### November Puzzler

Whatzit do? Check out the diagram below. Can you figure out what happens when the Momentary Switch is pressed? Why?

Send your answers via e-Mail to yours truly, n2bc@stny.rr.com. The winner gets a nifty trophy at the BARA Christmas Party in December. Decision of the judge is final and can be influenced with appropriate trinkets, money, promises, etc. 73, DE Bill N2BC

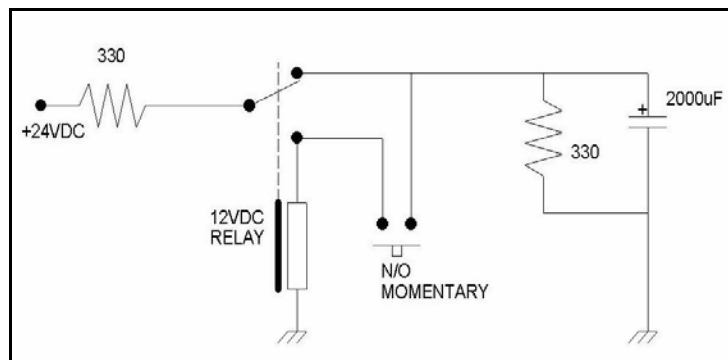
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### Moon Over Miami

Most hams have heard of moonbounce or EME (earth-moon-earth) communication, but did you know that the National Security Agency conducted the first clandestine moonbounce operation on December 15, 1961? Moreover, did you know that this operation was done aboard the USS *Oxford* off the coast of Cuba?

Well it's true. The vessel, formerly the Liberty Ship *Samuel R. Aitken*, was secretly converted by the U.S. Navy for electronic surveillance operations against Cuba. Due to the highly covert nature of this operation the NSA wanted a form of communication between the *Oxford* and the US mainland that could not be easily intercepted. NSA engineers came up with the idea of bouncing microwave transmissions off the moon because of the nearly vertical path of propagation. All of this surrounds the incident which has become known as the Bay of Pigs Invasion. In more recent times NSA has resorted to using the huge antenna at Arecibo, Puerto-Rico for moonbounce.

This story and more can be found in James Bamford's new book *Body of Secrets--Anatomy of the Ultra Secret National Security Agency*. Bamford's first book about the NSA was published in 1982 under the title *The Puzzle Palace*. If you're interested in Secret Squirrel stuff, both these books are a must read. Each book stands alone and you can read them in either order. Both entertaining and



shocking, these books give a great insight into how our federal tax dollars are spent.

Review by Bob Schroeder, N2HX, Past President of the Delaware Valley Amateur Radio Association. (TNX Jack, WB2GHH, for this article.)

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### Silent Key N2BLX

Sorry to record the passing of Robert "Bob" King, N2BLX on November 3, 2001. Years ago Bob was quite active in BARA, SVARA, RACES, ARES, Weather Watch (before SKYWARN) and River Watch (before automatic gages). I recall one instance in which he proved to be in the right place at the right time. A tornado hit the area of Twining Road and Endwell during supper hour. Weather watch had been activated. A request was received from the EOC to make contact with Albany Weather. Within two minutes, Bob had Albany Weather via patch through an Albany station on the New York Phone Traffic and Emergency Net on 3.925 MHz. The EOC was surprised with the speed of the response. Bob was a quite, big guy who served more than his share of midnight to dawn shifts at the EOC or on a river bank. I'll miss him. DE Jack, WB2GHH

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### Silent Key — W2SFW

It is with sadness that we record the passing of Theodore D. (Ted) Koranye, W2SFW, on November 9, 2001. A member of BARA, SVARA and QCWA. A "roll your own" type ham and experimenter in the microwave world of gunplexers. Public service communicator who worked the Vestal XX for a number of years. He will be missed. DE Jack, WB2GHH

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### Elmer Program

At the October meeting, the club started it's "Elmer" program for prospective hams. Here's how it works: If you know of a student who is interested in getting a license, bring them to a meeting or have them call any club officer or me (748-5232). BARA will provide a copy of the ARRL publication *Now You're Talking* and I will link up the student with a near-by "Elmer".

The student gets a free copy of the license study guide, you get to shepherd a young person interested in our hobby, and we all get to make a new friend!

If you have any questions or know a young person interested in the hobby, give me a call at 748-5232 or send an Email to [n2bc@arrl.net](mailto:n2bc@arrl.net). DE Bill, N2BC

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## Club Video Library

A few months ago the club purchased a set of 13 video tapes from the ARRL. There are a wide range of topics: Public Service, emergency preparedness, specialty communications, and old-time radio (to name just a few). The tapes are available to club members for use with a scout group, school event, or your personal viewing on a very slow Saturday night!. I will have the tapes at each general meeting – come and look over the various topics available. DE Bill N2BC

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## Remember our Local 2-Meter Nets

Many new Hams start out on 2-Meters and begin to make contacts on one or more of our local Repeaters. When you come across one, please make them welcome and let them know about our local 2-Meter Nets:

- ◆ 5:30 AM is the Early-Birds on the 146.82 machine.
- ◆ 6:30 PM is the Southern Tier Traffic Net (STAR) on the 146.73 machine.
- ◆ 8:00 PM (Sundays Only) is the Binghamton Radio Amateur Technical Net (BRAT) on the 147.39 machine.

These Nets are a great opportunity to get together, make new friends, and introduce the newcomer to "Roundtable" and "Net" Operating Procedure. Thanks also to the Net Managers and Net Control Stations who keep these on-the-air gatherings alive. Have YOU checked in lately?

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## School Contact with the ISS

By the time this issue goes to press a group of Hams at the Kopernik Space and Science Education Center will have made contact with the International Space Station (ISS) and -- through an effort on the part of many local and regional Hams -- they will have involved many schools and students in this exciting contact.

Locally, Hams at Kopernik including Richard Crow, N2SPI; Jerry Babcock, KG2FY; and John Kray, KA2CNG, will be operating from the science room with twenty-two students, parents, and other spectators in attendance. Ford Drake, AB2HS has agreed to help with a cross band rebroadcast on the 146.82 machine.

The event is being conducted in memorial of Kaz Desker, K2ZRO, who was a local Ham, a satellite pioneer, and one of the moving forces behind AMSAT and Project OSCAR.

Events like this are a great opportunity to get Amateur Radio in the public eye and they take a lot of effort to organize and present. This event has been a long time in the planning and you may recall that John, KA2CNG first worked to get the ball rolling many years ago. [Thanks to Ed, NE2W who has been spreading the word and recruiting volunteers on the BARA Reflector]

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## NWS/ARRL SKYWARN Recognition Day

On Saturday December 1, 2001 from 0000 to 2400 UTC the National Weather Service will conduct a Special Event to celebrate SKYWARN Volunteers. Dave Moreford, KB2TTT has registered the NWS Station, WX2BGM, at Link Field (the Binghamton Regional Airport) to participate. The goal of the event is FUN and the purpose is to strengthen the relationship between the NWS, SKYWARN Volunteers (who are not all Hams), and the Amateur Radio Community.

Full details can be found on pages 76-77 of the November issue of *QST*. Information is also available at the [hamradio.noaa.gov/ClubInfo.html](http://hamradio.noaa.gov/ClubInfo.html) Website.

Jack Smith, KB2YEN notes that several operators participated from the NWS Office at the Airport last year and that everyone had a lot of fun. If you are interested please contact KB2YEN or KB2TTT for more information or check out the Website. [Thanks to Jack, KB2YEN, for information on this event]

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## Reminder

Please remember that the Election of Club Officers and Directors for 2002 will be held at the General Meeting on November 21<sup>st</sup>. As always, nominations from the floor

are welcome. We hope to see you on the 21<sup>st</sup> and at the Christmas Party in December!