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# **BARA** Facts

*Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association*

**August 2005**

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

## **Presidents' Corner**

**PICNIC PLANS:** We have reserved an area at the Ross Park Zoo for our August Picnic Meeting once again. Please plan on bringing a friend, the kids, Grandparents, etc. The picnic is always a good time.

**BARA SHACK SITE PROGRESS:** At the July general meeting I presented the overall status of our search for a permanent operating site. We have found a potential location in Owego: Approximately 10 acres, good elevation, good access, and nearby power. As the team assessed the site we realized that there is one thing missing — Money!

Using the Owego property as an example here are some approximate numbers: Land \$16,000, Power \$7000, conversion of existing pole barn to club operating shack \$4000, installation of towers \$4000. A grand total of over \$30K.

Each potential location will have its own set of ups and downs in the numbers, but if the club is to achieve ownership of a piece of property, we are going to have to raise a significant sum of money.

At the July meeting I called for volunteers to work on a fund raising team. I have a few volunteers, maybe YOU would like to join. Our goal will be to raise \$30,000! We need to be ready when we find that perfect location. One member of the team has suggested a name for the effort: **BACK THE SHACK!**

We will be meeting in the next couple of weeks. If you would like to assist, give me a call or send me an Email. I'll keep you posted on ideas we come up with.

Enjoy the summer and see you at the picnic!  
— 73, Bill N2BC

**Of Dots and Dashes**

By now most Amateurs have heard of the FCC proposal to entirely eliminate Morse Code Testing. Although the FCC has not formally opened the comment period for *WT Docket 05-235*, hundreds of comments have already been received and more are expected.

According to the latest *ARRL Letter* the majority of comments seem to support the FCC Proposal although a fair number oppose the change and would like to see some form of Morse Testing retained. Whatever happens, we can be sure that the face of Amateur Radio will change forever.

But, the face of Amateur Radio changed forever when the Novice and Advanced License Classes were eliminated....

And when the entry class Codeless Technician Licence was introduced....

And the pages of *QST* were full of arguments *pro* and *con* when the FCC (or was it the FRC back then) reduced the code requirement from 20 WPM to 13 for the General Class License back in the olden days between Spark and SSB.

If we are really honest, we need to admit that the face of Amateur Radio is always changing whether the rules change or not. People, Culture, and Technology change and our Great Hobby is affected by all and changes with all.

When the dust settles we can be sure of this: Amateur Radio will still be there, changed perhaps and forever different, but there nonetheless. The more important question to ask is: What kind of face do *we* want to put on Amateur Radio?

Commenting on *WT Docket 05-235* is important and any Amateur who feels it necessary should offer reasoned comments, but as a community that is largely self-trained and self-regulated the way

that we greet and treat newcomers to our ranks (whether through upgrades or additional privileges) will determine the face of the future of Amateur

The future of Our Hobby is in *our* hands now — as it always has been. That future depends on each and every one of us and it might be well to ask what binds us together as Amateurs: Is it a shared affection for the Morse Code? A liking for communications and working DX? A taste for experimentation and technical advance? Or is it, perhaps, a tradition of working together, helping each other along, and Elmering into and within our ranks — *A couple of cents from Eddie the Editor*

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#### **2005 Scholarship Winner**

Amber Frost, KC2EYP, was named the winner of the 2005 Esther Valky Scholarship. We congratulate Amber and wish her success in her studies and future endeavors!

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#### **Safety First**

In an unfortunate accident at the 2005 Boy Scout Jamboree several leaders lost their lives when a tent pole came in contact with power lines. In another incident an Ohio Amateur lost his life while installing an Emergency Communications antenna at a Fire Station. Once again contact with a Power Line led to an accident.

Electric lines are all around us — so common that we almost forget that they are there. Don't let familiarity lead to carelessness. It's all too easy for a moment of carelessness to have fatal results: Keep your eyes open, be aware of all potential hazards, and have a helper handy to spot what you miss and warn of danger.

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#### **Craftsmen at Work**

Readers of *QST* may have noticed several projects from the shop of Jim Garland, W8ZR. Jim has designed and written articles describing an automatic Antenna Tuner and a Receiver Controller, but that does not begin to cover his interest in Amateur Radio.

Jim has been operating and collecting for many years and is a craftsman of a very high order. You might find his webpage at <<<http://www.miami.muohio.edu/president/personal/w8zr/>>> of interest.

From Sweden Hary Lythall, SM0VP0/G4VVJ maintains an extensive set of homebrew resources at <<[http://web.telia.com/~u85920178/right\\_01.htm](http://web.telia.com/~u85920178/right_01.htm)>>. Besides offering projects that he personally developed, Harry also has information on general

Radio and the quality and type of people that our Service attracts.

radio topics and ideas and suggestions from others.

If you like tubes and versions of tried and proven designs executed for the challenge of operating like the Old Timers you might find inspiration at Gary Johanson's, WD4NKA, Website at <<<http://www.qsl.et/wd4nka/form.html>>>. After you check out Gary's projects, take a look at his "Tube Pad" resources for drawing schematic diagrams using a basic Windows NotePad "word processor". And for some entertaining stories, try Gary's "Radio Rescuers Journal" and enjoy!

Al Klase, N3FRQ, has some interesting information on early and homebrew radio at <<<http://www.webex.net/~skywaves/home.htm>>>. If you visit, make sure that you check out the "Spy radios" and read about the receiver hidden inside an army canteen!

Closer to home Phil, N2BEE, shows us what he is up to at <<<http://n2bee.net/>>>. Check out the photos of his workbench and compare them to yours.

Rounding out this tour we'll mention — in passing and without comment — another of the local rascals who hangs his webpage at <<<http://home.stny.rr.com/n2bc/index.htm>>>.

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#### **Radio Amateurs Aid in Pacific Maritime Rescue**

*Mayday, Mayday, Mayday! This is the sailboat Enamorado. Mayday, Mayday!* That's what Wisconsin radio amateurs Ed Toal, N9MW, and Ralph Henes, W9CAR, heard during a casual Sunday morning net July 24 on 14.238 MHz that also involved Dick Mannheimer, K6LAE, in Los Angeles. Toal and Henes were able to contact the operator, Ken Saijo, KC6ORF — a California retiree — who confirmed the 35-foot sailing vessel was in trouble and needed help.

"All social chatter immediately stopped, and we declared an emergency in progress on frequency," Henes said. Then, while Toal gathered information from the operator aboard the Enamorado, Mannheimer and Henes both called the US Coast Guard to relay the boat's situation and position, which turned out to be in Mexican waters. Henes said the Coast Guard relayed their information to the Mexican Navy. Henes and Toal were able to copy KC6ORF well, although Mannheimer could not, and they maintained contact with the disabled boat.

The Wisconsin hams learned that that Saijo was accompanying the boat's skipper, Ken Scheibe, on a trip from California to Costa Rica when they ran into a storm. As a result, the vessel lost its engine and steering and both men were injured, neither seriously.

Mannheimer noted that Art Rowe, K7HA, in Washington, and Tom Miller, K4IC, in Arlington, Virginia, initially kept the frequency clear. They were subsequently joined by a host of other stations in the US and Canada, some of whom were able to copy KC6ORF and help relay as needed.

Toal had to leave after a couple of hours, but Henes and Mannheimer remained on frequency. About three hours into the incident, Henes again called the US Coast Guard to see if it had heard back from the Mexican Navy. It had not, so he called the Mexican Navy himself and, after what he described as "a few tense language-barrier moments," he was connected with someone who spoke English and Spanish and told that a rescue boat and helicopter were on the way.

Henes also got the Mexican Navy vessel to come up on 20 meters. "Within minutes, they were on the frequency calling the stranded boat," he said. Unfortunately, neither Saijo nor Scheibe spoke Spanish fluently enough to understand the communicator on the Mexican Navy vessel.

Enter Jorge Lira, XE1JP, who volunteered to serve as translator. He was able to relay the foundering sailboat's coordinates to Mexican authorities. "He saved the day," said Henes, who reports he was able to hear the rescue helicopter in the background on Saijo's transmission. Saijo and Scheibe were plucked to safety from the distressed vessel, which the Mexican Navy towed to safety.

Henes said he later received an e-mail from Scheibe thanking him and the other radio amateurs for helping. Toal said later, "To me, we were just paying our dues for the right to be hams."

A TV station and a newspaper in Madison, Wisconsin, were among the news media reporting the incident and Amateur Radio's role in coming to the rescue. — *from the ARRL Letter for 5 August 2005*

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#### Tools of the Trade

Casting around for ideas on Technical Content for the BARA Facts it occurs to your editor that a series of articles on the selection and use of some basic Service and Analysis Tools might be of interest.

Please consider this note an open invitation to

Before putting out distress calls on 20 meters, Saijo had tried without success to raise help via the vessel's VHF marine radio.

submit ideas, suggestions, outlines, and articles on the necessities for a decent Electronics Workbench. Don't be shy, we have some real masters in this club and we'd like to hear from you. A note to kb2scf@arrl.net will be sufficient as will a letter to the callbook address for kb2scf. Notes wrapped around bricks will quite likely receive prompt and vigorous attention.

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#### Military Emergency Radio Network

We are reminded by First Lieutenant Donald Odum (a Recruiting Officer in the 56th Brigade of the New York Guard) that the New York Guard offers an exceptional opportunity for ham radio club personnel to serve in uniform at home in their local communities in New York State, all while supporting our forces overseas.

The New York Guard (NYG) is one of the authorized militia branches in New York State under the command of the Governor and The Adjutant General.

One of the assigned state missions of the Guard is the manning of the Military Emergency Radio Network (MERN) during times of emergency. Citizens of the United States 18-64 years of age and in reasonably good health, are invited to consider serving their fellow citizens in New York right here at home in uniform.

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#### 2005 BARA Picnic

***QST, QST, QST: All BARA Members (and interested parties) are advised that the General Meeting for August will be held at the Small Picnic Pavilion in Ross Park.***

**The festivities will commence at 5:30 sharp (or thereabouts, no need to be overly precise).**

**Load up your trunk with treasures to swap and gizmos to barter. A "mini hamfest" will precede the feed and the Club wheelers, dealers, and purveyors of fine electronic artifacts are invited to display their wares.**

**Bring a dish to pass or dessert to share and invite Family, Friends, Neighbors, or Strangers (*stranger than us, that is*) to an**

enjoyable evening in the park.

If you have a portable rig bring it along, string a temporary skywire, and make some waves with W2OW!

With cover overhead and playground facilities for the kids to use (and to burn up energy on) an evening half-way up the to the hilltop offers many advantages and attractions.

The picnic is always fun, the food is great, and the company cannot be beat so remember to be at the Small Pavilion in Ross Park at 5:30 PM on the 17th of August.

Club Officers and Committees			
President	Bill Coleman	N2BC	748-5232
Vice President	Bob Handel	K2FU	693-4310
Secretary	allen lutins	KC2KLC	729-4817
Treasurer	Paul Slocum	N2NCB	687-2057
Directors	Steve Orzelek	N2MSB	775-0281
	Mel Snitchler	WE2K	723-9612
	Jack Connors	WB2GHH	724-8822
	Jim Lawson	KC2JED	797-1583
W2OW Trustee	Mel Snitchler	WE2K	723-9612
Newsletter	Ed Plesnar	KB2SCF	754-3810

BARA, The Binghamton Amateur Radio Association is an ARRL Affiliated Club

e-Mail Address: [w2ow@arrl.net](mailto:w2ow@arrl.net)

***Next General Meeting***

5:30 PM, Wednesday, August 17th

Ross Park — our Annual August Picnic — Note the Location and Time in this Newsletter



***Board Meeting***

7:00 PM, Wednesday September 7th

Broome Community College Campus, Office of Emergency Services (West Side of Campus)

***Exam Session***

7:00 PM Monday, August 29th

Vestal Public Library, Route 434 Vestal

***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)

***Local Repeater Nets***

146.73 MHz STAR Net (NTS Feeder) Monday-Friday Evening at 6:30 PM Local Time

146.82 MHz BRAT Net (Informal BARA) 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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