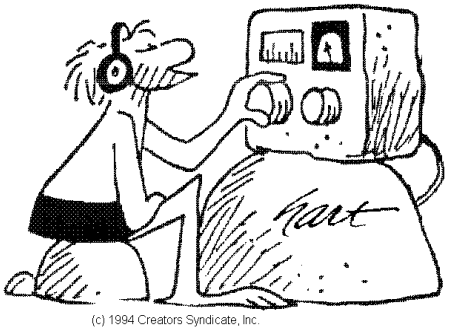

BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

February 2006

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

FLASH!

FEBRUARY MEETING

HOMEBREW NIGHT

BRING A KIT TO THE MEETING NIGHT

This is Your Opportunity

Show Them How it's Done

Brag & Boast

Show Off Your Best

Bring a project, gadget, gizmo or whatever to the January General Meeting

President's Corner

Thanks to Dave Morford, KB2TTT, and all of the local National Weather Service team for the fine presentation at the January meeting. Seems strange to be talking about SKYWARN in the middle of winter, especially so far this season! I suppose I should just keep that to myself in case Murphy is looking over my shoulder.

I also want to thank Bob McCabe, KC2DSS, for volunteering to take on the Club Secretary job. Bob is responsible for documenting the "official" parts of our meetings and I welcome his input and ideas as a member of the club officer team, THANKS Bob!

The theme for February is homebrew and build-it-yourself (aka kits). I encourage everybody to bring something to show off to the members. Some people know that many of my homebrew projects are less than portable, so I'll bring pictures and maybe a small project or two. AA2EQ, you are encouraged to DRIVE your homebrew project to the meeting. If you have something you've built from scratch or from a kit, bring it to the meeting and show it off!

There are a bunch of opportunities coming up that need leaders. Two super Special Event possibilities: The 200th anniversary of Broome County and the 150th anniversary of the Town of Binghamton. Then in June there is Field Day. These are great opportunities to raise awareness of our hobby and more importantly our capabilities. If you are interested in leading the club's Field Day or pulling together a special event station, give me a call (748-5232) or send me an email (n2bc@stny.rr.com).

Another 'opportunity' looms.... May 6, 2006 is committed for our annual Hamfest at Marvin Park in Owego. The ARRL has listed the event and we're getting ready to advertise to nearby clubs and hamfests. Mark your calendars: May 5 is setup day (usually takes a couple hours), May 6 is the hamfest followed by cleanup (again a couple hours). It takes lots of arms and legs to do the hamfest, I am looking forward to seeing all the usual suspects plus lots of first-timers!

Hope to see a big turnout at the February meeting - February 15, BE THERE! — *DE Bill, N2BC*

SPI in the Sky

It's always nice when one of our Local Boys scores a run.

NEWINGTON, CT, Feb 8, 2006 — Based on recent reports, the already-puny 145.99 MHz signal from *SuitSat-1* may be getting even weaker, but at least one earthbound radio amateur has been able to copy a very nearly complete telemetry transmission. ARRL member Richard Crow, N2SPI, of Smithville Flats, New York, heard the SuitSat-1 audio during a February 8 pass at approximately 1350 UTC. The

recording indicated a reasonably strong signal

"Yippee!," Crow exulted in a posting on the Web site of A.J. Farmer, AJ3U, who's been collecting SuitSat audio clips. "I just captured the telemetry for SuitSat-1". Between fades caused by the rolling of *SuitSat-1,* the telemetry in a woman's voice clearly gives the mission time as 006607 minutes, the temperature as 12 degrees Celsius and the battery voltage as approximately 26 V. A signal fade during the voltage transmission made it impossible to hear the fractional part of the voltage reading after the word "point" indicating the decimal point. The nominal battery voltage is 28 V, so the telemetry Crow copied suggests the batteries are not the problem behind generally weak signal received from *SuitSat-1.*

Crow also copied a voice ID and other information in Russian. "My four stacked M2 2m12 antennas are bringing home the bacon!" Crow said. He also remarked that he was able to download "some pretty decent *SuitSat-1* image data" that he may post later to the AJ3U site. He already submitted SSTV audio. The space image includes the logo of *SuitSat-1's* sponsor, the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program, in the upper-left corner and has some text superimposed on the bottom of the frame.

Farmer, who lives in Maryland, has invited the Amateur Radio and monitoring communities to post audio clips to site. — *From the ARRL Web Site via Jack Connors, WB2GHH, RO RACES Broome County and the BARA Reflector*

Recognized in Congress

US Rep Mike Ross, WD5DVR (D-AR), this week offered *A Salute to Ham Radio Operators* on the floor of the US House. Ross, one of two Amateur Radio licensees in the House of Representatives (the other is Rep Greg Walden, W7EQI, R-OR), addressed his colleagues February 8 to recognize the contributions of the Amateur Radio community in the wake of last year's devastating hurricane season.

"Citizens throughout America dedicated to this hobby — hobby that some people consider old fashioned or obsolete — were true heroes in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as they were often the only line of communication available into the storm ravaged areas," Ross said.

He noted that while ham radio is often overlooked "in favor of flashier means of communication," Gulf Coast communities learned after the 2005 hurricanes that technology can be "highly vulnerable" to storm damage. "Ham radios, entirely self-contained transmitters, require no cell towers or satellites, simply a battery and a strip of wire as an antenna," Ross explained.

Because of the "critical intervention" of radio amateurs across the US, Ross said, many lives were saved following Hurricane Katrina.

"The dedication displayed by ham radio operators in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina sets a tremendous example for us all," Ross concluded, noting that "now more than ever" he's proud to be an Amateur Radio operator. "The people whose lives were rescued as a result of the tireless dedication of ham radio operators will forever be grateful to these selfless public servants." — *From the* ARRL Letter *for 10 February*

Thirty on the Line

If you were listening carefully on the 27th of January, you might have heard the bell toll "30" for the Telegram because on that day Western Union formally ended its Telegram and Commercial Messaging Services after some one hundred and fifty-five years. It might seem a small thing, and perhaps the idea of a Telegram in the day of Cell-Phone and e-Mail seemed an obsolete and useless mode of communication, but it was truly a technology that changed our world.

Our world is smaller today and in large part this is the result of the Telegraph which united cities, states, and countries with a web of iron wires strung on wooden poles. Train Orders lubricated the wheels of transportation; Press Dispatches made happenings on one coast known to the other in short hours; and Financial Transactions laid the foundations for a Global Marketplace.

In the techniques and protocols of the Telegraph we find the roots of the procedures of our Radio Nets and the first principles of the Internet and Wireless Networks so many take for granted.

Mark Twain writes of the period after the Civil War and in a particularly moving account notes how Beacon Fires appeared on the Eastern Horizon as speculation ran rife of whether they signaled war or calamity while the only person in town who knew the secret (the Telegraph Operator) remained silent — his lips sealed by a bond of secrecy — until the

Associated Press story appeared in the next edition of the paper.

But beside these real changes in our society and our connection with distant events the Telegraph provided something else: A chance for advancement

The Electric Telegraph, which demanded nothing in the way of social standing, but only study and careful application to its principles became the avenue for advancement and success for many a City Boy and Farmer's Son. Trained by self-study or apprenticeship to an Operator these men (and women) found their horizons growing and the opportunity of employment in any town or city (or whistle-stop) that boasted a Telegraph Office.

Times change and technology moves on. The clicking key and sounder were replaced by Teletype and the Telephone replaced the Telegram Boy with his flimsy yellow envelope, but the Telegram lived still. As long-distance rates fell and direct dialing made immediate communication cheaper the Telegram remained a mode that still provided Impact and (perhaps more significantly) Immediate Delivery with a bona-fide record of transmission and delivery. Western Union adapted slightly to the times and in the early seventies introduced the "Mailgram" transmitted by wire and delivered by post the next day, but gradually and without fanfare the number of messages decreased while Wire Transfers (another service pioneered by the Telegraph) increased.

Today the Western Union Telegram is gone. Finally and officially. And so this piece ends as did so many messages in American Morse with the signal "thirty" — *dididididahdi dahhh* — and the keys go silent.

Field Day Notes

Bill, N2BC, remarked on Field Day earlier in this issue. It would really be nice if BARA mounted a real presence on the bands this year and perhaps if we could do it in a way that involves the general public. As food for thought, here's something to chew on:

The 2006 ARRL Field Day package is available from the ARRL Web Site <<http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/06-fd-packet.pdf>> "The only rule change in 2006 involves the GOTA (Get On The Air) station bonus-point structure," says ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND. "An individual operator may earn a 50-point bonus for completing 50 QSOs at the GOTA station. They may earn an additional 50 bonus points when
they reach 100 QSOs."

Henderson notes there's a 100-QSO cap for bonus points per individual GOTA operator, but additional GOTA operators may earn the bonuses for the club, up to a maximum of 500 GOTA bonus points.

"Additionally, Field Day operations can double their GOTA bonus points by having a designated GOTA Coach/Mentor supervise the station whenever it's on the air," Henderson notes. "The GOTA Coach/Mentor may talk the participants through the QSOs and serve as control operator, but GOTA participants must make and log all QSOs themselves."

This means that if a Field Day group has a GOTA Coach/Mentor, the 50 and 100-point bonuses GOTA operators earn will double to 100 and 200 points respectively, while the maximum GOTA bonus increases to 1000 points.

ARRL Field Day 2006 will be Saturday and Sunday, June 24-25. — *From the* ARRL Letter *for 10 February*

When Great Granddad Was a Pup

Modern Electrics

Back around the turn of the next-to-last century when Wireless was a new and novel idea, Hugo Gernsback tapped into the market of people hungry for "electrical" knowledge with his magazine *Modern Electrics.* Each issue was filled with ideas, speculation, and knowledge of a technology so new that anyone could grasp it.

The *Experimental Department* was a popular feature where people like W.F. Hall in Australia, Berthel Carlson, Fannon Beauchamp, Jay Jakowsky, and R. Treweeke met in happy comradeship to exchange their ideas and insights.

Lindsay (who else) has gleaned the pages of the 1911 and 1912 issues and gathered a 48-page booklet of *Experimental Crystal Set Receivers Hints, Tips, and Secrets* (ISBN 1-55918-327-6).

Some ideas were silly, but others showed remarkable creativity in fabricating such things as in a world that was still socially stratified. The Technology was new and to many it was a black art. Electricity — a subject of arcane investigation and a side-show curiosity — suddenly had "practical" value and acolytes of the "Electric Arts" were in demand.

variable inductances (C.J. Sedlak's *Rotary Tuning Coil*) and condensers (N.E. Dorrington's *Small Variable Condenser*) at a time when none could be had commercially. Others pushed the to the leading edge of technology (the *Tickers* of Stanley Hyde, Ellery Stone, and Jas. Leroy Hodges). Some were remarkable (*Mearle Mellinger's Flame Audion* hints at an understanding of the Electron Tube beyond that of DeForest).

We who have seen the Electronic Computer move from the Research Laboratory into the home by way of the Tinkerer's Garage are well-able to appreciate the role of the enthusiastic amateur. Those of us who have built Heathkits (and others) or scrounged parts from cast-off chassis can appreciate that "there were giants in those days" — Those far-off and fondly remembered days when Great-Grandad was a Pup.

Club Officers and Committees			
President	Bill Coleman	N2BC	748-5232
Vice President	Bob Handel	K2FU	693-4310
Secretary	Bob McCabe	KC2DSS	748-9808
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

Next General Meeting

7:30 PM, Wednesday, February 15th

Town of Binghamton Town Hall, 279 Park Avenue, South of the Ross Park Entrance

Board Meeting

7:00 PM, Wednesday March 1st

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

Exam Session

7:00 PM Monday, February 27th

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

Local Repeater Nets

146.73 MHz STAR Net (NTS Feeder) Every

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.
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First Class