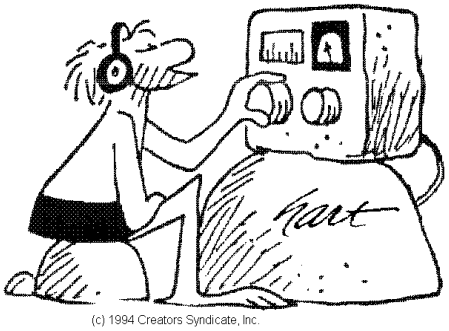

BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

March 2006

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

Hold the Presses!

Late News, But GREAT News!

The newsletter was running a bit late, so I decided to hold it a little more to include some late breaking and very good news.

The club has received and executed the lease for the Milks Road site. We will have access to the site beginning April 1, 2006. The terms of the lease are very similar to our last lease. At the March 15th general meeting, the membership approved one last minute expenditure and now the lease is official.

I want to thank Jack Connors, WB2GHH, for taking the lead on this one.

Now the physical work begins. We have towers to install, antennas to hang, coax to run. But soon we'll be back on the air!

Keep an eye on the BARA website, <<http://www.wtsn.binghamton.edu/bara/>> for more news, pictures, and announcements. — *73, Bill N2BC*

President's Corner

Dateline Southern Tier, March 5, 2006.

Winter is back! Seems we are paying for all that early antenna-putting-up weather. 6" of fluffy white stuff has covered almost everything up here. I think there are some very confused flowers and birds around too. Not to worry though, antenna weather (Spring) is right around the corner — I hope.

Spring will bring our club lots of opportunities. We are progressing on the lease for the Milks Road site. One hold up has been a logging contract which forbids access while the logging is underway. Jack Connors, WB2GHH, reports that the logging has begun. The return of winter weather is a good thing for the loggers and for the logged property. I am hopeful we will close on the lease and begin "moving in" soon.

I am pleased to report that Steve Orzelek, N2MSB, will lead the club's Field Day activity. Field Day is June 24 and 25. I know that June 22 or so is the start of Summer, but the planning for Field Day will be in the Spring (NOW!). Steve will be looking for victims, errr, volunteers
to get things rolling. We would like to "Field" three stations and have some fun too. The key ingredient is *you.* Mark that weekend on your calendar.

There is an HF phone contest underway as I type this. There's Serbia, Iceland, Greece, Italy, Brazil, Mexico, Columbia — all looking for contacts with US stations. Are you HF capable? Need a license upgrade? WANT to upgrade? The club can help, but it takes a critical mass of interest on your part. Send me an e-mail or give me a call. With enough interest we could pull together a class.

Just a minute, let me check the club's packet DX Cluster to see what kind of activity is really out there. WOW!, some rare ones, I better get going. So, what is packet? What is a DX Cluster? Our program for the

March meeting will focus on packet and the kinds of communications that can happen via packet radio. Hope to see you there (March 15 7:30 PM). — *73, Bill N2BC*

A Word From the Editor

Several members have pointed out to me that their *Facts* have been shredded by the Post Office. I'd like to apologize for that and assure you that I have contacted the Post Office and studied the *Mailing Manual* [great reading if you suffer insomnia] to try and avoid this. We are a low-budget operation and

we try to minimize the amount of handling involved in folding and mailing the *Facts,* but sometimes this runs afoul of high-speed automated sorting equipment.

One change that will be made is in the layout of the last page. The design was done many years ago and I will change it to place the fold at the bottom edge of the page to facilitate the feed through the sorters.

I do appreciate the comments and if this matter had not been brought to my attention, I would not have known that there was a problem. Thanks, and be assured that I'll do what can be done to minimize this problem — *Eddie the Editor*

ARRL Katrina Response

How It Worked

The material that follows is from the RTT (Response Technology Team) NEWSLETTER — SPECIAL EDITION for February 2006. *It was written by Mike Mitchell, Communication Manager for the American Red Cross in Montgomery, Alabama and was forwarded by Tom Vroman KC2OKF who worked as a member of the Response Recovery Team during his Katrina assignment from Broome County.— Thanks to Jack, WB2GHH*

ARRL, THERE WHEN NOTHING ELSE WORKS: As you read this account of the amazing work of the American Radio Relay League during Katrina please thank our very own Mike Mitchell who wrote this special edition for us.

So, what do you do when you are told, I have 250 shelters with no form of communications" and then you are asked "what can you can do about this?" There is nothing like a challenge to get you started.

On 9/1/05 I arrived in Montgomery, AL and was presented with the above challenge. Only one possible solution came to mind — so off I went to see if I could put the necessary pieces together to solve this puzzle.

I called the ARRL National offices and was greeted by an answering machine reminding me that it was after hours. Knowing that we were going into a long weekend, I knew I had to reach someone now or I would have to wait 4 days to get anything started. I called a chapter volunteer in Chicago who patched me into a conversation with ARRL Central Division Director Dick Isely. I explained to Dick that we had over 250 shelters in MS and AL, some with populations of over 1000 people. I went on to inform him that we had no commercial communications (land line or cell phone coverage) available at any of these shelters and that we expected it would be weeks before commercial communications would be made available. It quickly became apparent to him that there was no way to call for an ambulance or emergency services when needed. Now I was confident that he understood the magnitude of the situation, so I asked the question this was leading up to. Can the ARRL provide us with amateur radio operators to staff these shelters and provide the necessary communications? He took down my contact information, three cell phone numbers, one IP phone number and the NOC phone number. I certainly did not want to miss a return call from the ARRL! He said he would contact the necessary people and have them call me as quickly as possible. Within an hour I had a call back from Harold Kramer, Chief Operating Officer for the ARRL. Harold quickly had a grasp of the situation and assured me that they would be able to help. He then put my mind to rest when he told me that the ARRL would staff their office all weekend (Labor Day Weekend) to ramp up the recruiting efforts.

We mutually agreed to have all interested volunteer operators initiate their conversations with the ARRL at their National Headquarters in Newington, CT. Harold agreed to have his staff perform initial screening of applicants, validating their ability and licensing, before providing them with instructions where to report. We further agreed to have all the volunteers report to the Montgomery Headquarters, where they would be processed into the DR and given assignments.

Within 48 hours the ARRL volunteers started to arrive. First on the scene (thank goodness) was Greg Sarratt, ARRL Section Manager for Alabama. I can not say enough great things about Greg, who remained in Montgomery long after I left. He is the most down to earth, calm individual you will ever meet. He has great organizational skills and immediately hit the ground running, taking total responsibility for managing the Amateur Radio volunteers. He set up the ARRL command post in the Montgomery HQ, next to the RTT "office."

Immediately upon his arrival, Greg and I met and mutually established these policies and procedures:

1. All ARRL volunteers would check in with

Greg in Montgomery.

2. They would in-process with Staff Services as LDV's.
3. They would be provided with staff cards to cover incidental expenses; we mutually
5. Each of us would make the other aware of any personnel issues and mutually decide the appropriate course of action.
6. Greg would assign them to a shelter, where they would set up, maintain and operate radio equipment.
7. All communications would be to and from the Montgomery HQ, staffed by Greg and other ARRL volunteers.
8. Greg and I agreed that all communications would be limited to emergency traffic and supplies/equipment request. We would not do welfare inquiry communications. With 250 shelters having a population of 1000 or more in each, appropriate welfare inquiry traffic would be too difficult. Had we started, we would not been able to stop and it would had prevented us from being able to broadcast emergency traffic when needed.
9. We would provide the ARRL desk with an RTT volunteer at all times to assist as needed.
10. Greg and I communicated at least twice a day to make sure that each of our requirements was being met. Greg also participated in the RTT daily briefings to report how his team was doing and to be kept aware of what we were doing.

Helping and Not Hindering

Mike Mitchell's notes above provide lots of food for thought and it isn't out of place to highlight some important lessons for Responders and Communicators.

First, organization is key and a hierarchy of command is absolutely necessary (see points 1, 6, and 10). Communicators need to know who is responsible for directing communications and who organizes, assigns, and directs the effort. The key point is that "turf battles" are not appropriate.

Second, the permitted types of communications must be defined. Points (7) and (8) help assure that the system will not become overloaded. They also permit coordination of resources and the development of "situation summaries" that assist in the allocation of resources.

agreed on an amount they would be provided, partially dependant on the number of days they were expected to work.

4. They would each attend the standard orientation provided by Staffing.

If stations bypass "Net Discipline" by communicating directly an emerging stress on resources could go unnoticed until it becomes "The Problem".

Third, the "response structure" must not overstress its human resources. Human volunteers need maintenance as well. A volunteer needs to know what is expected of him or her and how long they will be "activated" Points (3) and (5) address these issues and Point (4) supports them.

Fourth, volunteers need to seriously consider their own abilities and assure that they will not place an undue burden on the system. Make sure that you have sufficient personal supplies. You can always "jettison" things you don't need, but it won't be easy to "go back" for what you need.

Sixth is the matter of credentials. The people nursing a damaged system back to health need to assure themselves if the integrity of their volunteers. We know the danger of an idiot transmitting false distress signals on a Public Safety or Maritime Circuit. Consider what could happen if such a nitwit imbedded himself in a Emergency Net.

So You're Under Pressure

How Much Exactly?

I overheard a discussion the other day pertaining to the accuracy of barometric pressure as indicated on personal electronic weather stations. On many units the pressure can be adjusted to a known reference. The problem is what reference?

You could use the National Weather Service (NWS) broadcasts as a source for barometric pressure, but depending on your station location relative to the originating NWS site your barometric pressure may be different. What to do? Well, consider the following.

A variety of personal WX stations have the barometric pressure sensor contained within the battery operated display unit. Why not take the weather station display unit (and pressure sensor) to an airport that continually broadcasts the barometric pressure along with other weather and airport conditions? The system is called ATIS (Automatic Terminal Information System) and is used by pilots to receive the most current weather and other important

field conditions.

At the airport (or to it and at the same elevation), tune in the ATIS signal and adjust your pressure indication so it agrees with the ATIS. What is the ATIS frequency? It varies by airport. The Binghamton Regional ATIS is at 128.15 MHZ; Elmira ATIS is at 125.475 MHz; Syracuse ATIS is at 132.05 MHz (all within the extended receive range of most two meter transceivers).

Once calibrated, your system can be used as a "secondary standard" for other pressure indicators.

So, whether you want to or not the above method is an easy way to know (almost) exactly how much pressure you're under(excluding, of course spouse and job pressures). — *DE Jack, WB2GHH*

Binghamton Amateur Radio Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 853
Binghamton, New York 13902

First Class

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, March 15th

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

Board Meeting

7:00 PM, Wednesday April 5th

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

Exam Session

7:00 PM Monday, March 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