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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

May 2006

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

President's Corner

The Hamfest has come and gone. It's 5PM May 6th and the sun is streaming through my window, where was it hiding this morning? I haven't seen the counts yet, but it looked like attendance was down some this year. The day started out with a drizzle at about 5:30 AM and stayed pretty dreary through the morning. The rain wasn't heavy, but I suspect it was enough to keep some people home.

There were lots of familiar faces though. Setup on Friday was well attended and the PA System was installed and tested. Our Ticket Takers were on the job bright and early greeting folks as they entered the fairgrounds. The BARA Table was manned with announcements and talk-in. With N2NCB involved in everything (as usual). When Cleanup Time came, so many pitched in that we were done on time. Thanks to all for another fun Hamfest!

There's not much we can do about the weather, but as usual the BARA team pulled together and we had a great Hamfest.

Shack news: WE HAVE POWER! The service was restored after the meter box was replaced and some not-to-code wiring was repaired. NYSEG hooked things up again and we are on the way! We are working on preparing at least one tower and refurbishing some antennas. Plans are crisping up for a gala Grand Opening on Field Day at the end of June. More info will follow here in the BARA FACTS, on the YAHOO reflector, and via announcements on the local repeaters.

The May General Meeting will feature a presentation by Tom Siglin WA2LTD on antenna

Join us 24-25 June beginning at Noon on Saturday the 24th — rain or shine — for some fun.

modeling. Tom will show us how to harness the power of our personal computers to design effective antennas. Tom has put this to practical use with his own antenna farm and this will be a very interesting program! — DE Bill, N2BC

Thanks, and Thanks Again!

The turnout of Hamfest Helpers this year was truly gratifying. Lots of people pitched in and setup and teardown finished with plenty of time to spare. Helpers also turned out on the day of the fest and everyone seemed to have a good time.

At the risk of missing someone who helped out, we extend thanks to the following:

Paul, N2NCB; Ed, KB2SCF; Ford, AB2HS; Jack, WB2GHH; Phil, N2BEE; Shep, W2BSB; Paul, K2ABX; Bob, WS2U; Al, WB2FBT; John, N2YZI; Rick; N2VKM; Bob, KC2DSS; Bill, WB8RAE; John, KC2KUW; Victor, N2LZM; Don, N2NON; Ray, KC2GIL; Norm, N3YKF; Steve, N2MSB; Blake, KC2GQX; and Brian K2DLB.

If anyone was missed in the above list, your editor apologizes. Many hands were in the pot, and some people neglected to sign-in so we filled in the gaps as best we could

Field Day Notes

In our Grand BARA Tradition of finding a reason for a party at every opportunity we are going to Christen the Shack on Field Day and we want YOU to be part of the celebration! Join your Fellow BARA Members on the Hilltop for Field Day. We will be up there with food and frivolity (and radios) from the Start of Field Day to the Very End.

The Club will supply food, snacks, and beverages; but any "pot luck" donations will be welcome. Come as

you are and operate from our facilities using the W2OW Call or bring your own equipment, string a wire, and operate under your own Callsign. The Primary Mode is “Enjoy Yourself” with an emphasis on Making RF!

More planning at the General Meetings in May and June, so join us. Steve, N2MSB, is our Field Day Chairman. Please don’t hesitate to invite Friends and Family to come along for the fun.

Newcomers Note that the Shack Site is on Milks Road in the Town of Binghamton. Head up Park Ave past our Meeting Place and keep on heading South, well past the Town Hall and the Fire Station on to Hawleytown Road. When you see the Town Garage on the right look to the left for Milks Road. Head up Milks Road and on the top of the hill (as Milks Road curves right) you will see the driveway into

the Shack Site.
to Binghamton.

Talk-In will be on the 146.73 Repeater — Listen there on the morning of the 24th and throughout Field Day for last-minute announcements.

Fifty Five and Counting

By way of Paul, N2NCB, we learn that on 21 April 21, 2006 our own Paul Fisher, K2ABX, was acknowledged at the QCWA luncheon for 55 years in Ham Radio. This is an event worthy of recognition and K2ABX picks up the thread: I got my novice license when I was 17 living in Detroit, Michigan. My call was WN8IQH — International Quality Hamburgers. I was attending Cass Technical High School in downtown Detroit. Back Then it took me five trips to the FCC office to pass my General code exam at 13 WPM — I could go every 30 days. I was W8IQH until I had to change it when IBM moved me to NY in 1964. [*“WN” Calls were issues to Novices in those days of yore. The “N” was dropped when the licensee was upgraded. — spacefiller and a bit of history from the editor*]

A Nice Desk Job

On Monday, 8 May The Broome County Office of Emergency Services donated a number of call center operating positions to BARA, Inc. for use in refitting the W2OW shack. The rehabilitation project at the

call center was on a very tight and precise schedule. When the call positions were torn out BARA had to be immediately available to transport the furniture off site. Initial plans were being developed and all was going well until late Saturday morning when LIFE decided to make some changes. Family events dictated my presence in Skaneateles on Sunday and in Pittston, Pa. on Monday. So, crisis mode set in by noon Saturday and the tasks were passed off to some very “willing” volunteers. K2LDB indicated he would supply the transportation; AB2HS indicated he would make some interface calls to the EOC; N2MSB indicated he would make himself available; N2NCB “volunteered” (even after all the extra hours and effort he put in before, during and after the Hamfest); KB2AX and N3YKF responded to my e-mail yelp for assistance. As I write this I have no details of the actual events that took place except a note from N2NCB indicating successful completion of the action.

The general membership should know who made the event happen, on extremely short notice. We owe these gents our thanks and I invite you to express them individually at the next meeting. — Jack, WB2GH

Review — Wirebook IV

Those who have been in this game for a while will likely remember the slim blue *Wirebooks* composed by Press Jones, N8UG as “The Wireman”. Well, I’m happy to report that Press is back with the *Wirebook IV* and it is better than ever with bigger type, a paperback style binding, and updated information for a new generation of Hams (and those who have been around for a while).

Let’s begin with “Full Disclosure” and note that Press sells Wire and related Antenna Stuff for a living. The book is a collection of his notes on what he has learned and it does end with a brief catalogue of the products that he sells. But, the products have stood the test of time and the facts and figures that Press offers are backed up and verifiable in the vast body of expert literature that has grown up around Antennas, Feedlines, and Grounding.

That being said, the same facts and figures often contradict the “folk wisdom” of our hobby and this is one of the best reasons for a new (or old) Ham to grab a copy of *Wirebook IV*. There is just too much mistaken opinion and half-facts about Antennas, Feedlines, and Grounds floating around

and Press injects some solid knowledge into the conversation.

Beginning with Coax and Connectors, Press works his way through Grounding, Antennas, Baluns, Ropes, Open Wire Line, and practical items too

When I bought my first copy, the price was about \$2.00. This new edition carries a cover price of \$12.00, but I paid it happily and it is worth every penny. Grab a copy today. If you want a second opinion, I believe that “Krusty Old Kurt” at *Worldradio* has referred with favor to Press on more than one occasion.

Wirebook IV by Press Jones, N8UG, (ISBN 0-9726192-0-8) is available from Wireman Distributors, the Wireman himself, and through the usual distribution channels.

A Little Knowledge

Having a son old enough to begin Scouting has gotten your editor involved in Cub Scouts as a Den Leader and given him a chance to work first-hand with a group of second-to-third grade boys. I’m not going to suggest that you run out and join, but I would like to take a moment to tell you about some of my experiences.

First of all, working with kids can be a real challenge. Their attention spans are sometimes short and their need for activity keeps any leader busy, but the work is rewarding as well. They can also surprise you with their insights and their ability to reason.

Tonight was something else. After a busy week at work and Hamfest Duty thrown in the mix, I had had no time to prepare a program and I was faced with the possibility of ten kids and no program. At the last moment (and almost in desperation) I threw a Dry Cell and box of buzzers, bells, switches, and lamps into the car and decided to wing it.

The battery and “mysterious bits” sure caught their attention. There were a few questions and even a few observations on “positive and negative” and “seeing something like that in the book”. After a bit of introduction I demonstrated how a buzzer could be sounded using the battery and the boys were hooked. They played with circuits for the next forty-five minutes and almost forgot about their snack and their time outside. We buzzed buzzers, lit bulbs, ran motors, and connected switches and a couple of the boys even stayed inside to experiment further when the rest went out on the playground.

It was fun, but it also reminded me that lots of

numerous to mention. If you don’t feel confident to tackle Walt Maxwell or the *ARRL Antenna Handbook*, the *Wirebook* is well within your reach and will reward careful study with practical knowledge.

kids don’t have the opportunity to play with batteries and wires. We had a similar experience in the spring when we worked with wood and making shavings and chips for the first time delighted those boys to no end.

It was different “back in my day”: I remember having lots of fun “making stuff” before I got into grade school.

We talk about “talking up” Ham Radio and we worry about the “greying” or our ranks and it is well that we do so. Any hobby or activity fades away and dies if it does not maintain a “replacement level” of new blood. We may be fighting against Cell Phones, Computers, Games, and the Internet; but I believe that kids (boys *and* girls) are still hungry for experimentation and discovery.

I’d like to invite each and every reader of the *Facts* to give this some thought. Perhaps as Summer begins you might make up a “care package” from your Junkbox and present it to a younger relative or neighbor. Offer it up with some one-on-one company with plenty of breaks for walks and play and you might make a friend for life and start someone down the road to a rewarding hobby or career.

New Technician Question Pool

Persons planning to take the Element 2 (Technician) License Examination are advised that a new Question Pool will go into effect on 1 July. If you — or someone you know — is planning to take the exam, you should plan on attending the May or June Examination Session at the Vestal Public Library.

Volunteer Examiners administer the FCC Amateur License Exams on the last Monday of each month (7:00 PM) at the Vestal Library (just West of the Route 26/Route 434 Interchange). If the last Monday of the month is a legal holiday, the exam session is conducted the previous Monday. Note also that there is usually no exam in July or August.

Contact Bob Soltis, WA2VCS, (607) 754-7940 for more information.

News of the 82

By way of Ford, AB2HS, and Brian, K2DLB, we learn that the receiver for the 22/82 repeater has decided to oscillate by itself. The result was a cycling

courtesy beep every 30 seconds to a minute so the machine was taken down for repairs. For the moment the 146.265/ 146.865 is in the place of the 82 repeater and is working fine running under carrier access. It is suggested that users program for the 146.2 tone in the event that it becomes necessary to switch to tone mode. Operation is just like the 82, but without any remotes. There is no immediate prognosis on how long it will take to repair the 82 Machine

Wireless is a thrilling pastime. Fancy a boy sitting in his room at home with his fingers on a telegraph key and a telephone receiver to his ear *listening-in* to the news of the world as it is flashed out from the great coast stations or by ships far out at sea! It's a great experience. Yet thousands of boys are doing this wonderful thing every day and night of the year, and you, my young friend, can do it as easily as they, for any boy can own a real wireless station, if he really wants to. — A. Frederick Collins, *The Book of Wireless*, 1915.

Binghamton Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

P. O. Box 853

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First Class

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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, May 17th

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

Board Meeting

7:00 PM, Wednesday June 7th

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

Exam Session

7:00 PM Monday, May 22nd

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