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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

January 2007

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

President's Corner

Well, I'd like to thank everyone for the honor of standing as your president once again. In all seriousness, I was willing to take the job when it was suggested to me and I was willing because I like this Club and I like the Members. I look forward to working with the Officers and Directors and also with you, the Membership at Large.

Those of you who know me know that my interests are primarily technical and historical (I find the details and progress of this Radio Game fascinating) and my operating is generally 2-Meter Mobile with very rare excursions into HF. I've also been the editor of this fine Newsletter since sometime in 2001.

With the introductions out of the way, I think it best to let you know what I would like to emphasize in 2007. Nothing spectacular here, just some things that I would like to keep "on the radar" for the entire year:

First, Activities and Participation. I think that we, as a Club, have reached a point of decision. When we lost the Shack, we lost a part of our identity and I think that we have all drifted a bit. The Shack is back, now, but we need re-focus our vision and decide how we get our Club Body back in shape. I would like to see an increased turnout at the meetings and more active participation by the membership and I am asking all of you to help by trying to stop by the Town of Binghamton Hall (7:30 PM, local) on the third Wednesday of each month. Let's all make the effort and see if we can grow our meetings.

Second, the meetings. I am not really fond of endless reports and reviews of old and new business. I promise to keep the "business" portion of each meeting as brief as possible (but I will never do this at

the cost of shutting off a good debate or discussion). I will also work with our Vice President to see that we have good and interesting programs. Finally, we will do our best to make sure that sometime between the meeting opening and closing we have time to socialize and renew acquaintance with each other. I would also like to explore other "outside" social and operating activities — either at the Shack or somewhere else.

Third, Membership. Although new Members join us, or overall membership is not growing, in fact it declines. Too many keys have gone silent and too many of our comrades have moved on. While none of us can stop the march of time, we can all work to bring in new members. I want this to be one of our priorities this year and I challenge each Member to invite another Ham to attend a meeting. YOU are the best advertisement for BARA!

Fourth, Funding. Our Club needs funding to operate as an organization. Insurance and related requirements are a sizable expense and some of our operating costs increase each year. The Shack Lease is a new expense that we have not had to cover for some time. Dues only cover a portion of these expenses, the Hamfest funds another portion. It would be wise to consider other funding approaches and it is important that we have your support for these activities.

(Let me make a parenthetical note here: The Shack and Shack Lease are Club Projects, but several members have made sizable donations of money, time, and material to the effort to rebuild the Shack and to reestablish our presence on the Hill. These donations reduce the cost for the Club and they represent a display of much appreciated commitment from those members.)

Those are my “priorities” for the year and I hope that you will work with me and with the other Officers and Directors to build up our Club. I ask that you start by attending the January General

SK Bill Valky, K2MFB

Bill Valky, K2MFB passed away on Sunday 24 December 2006. Bill had been in declining health for quite a while.

Bill was a member of BARA for decades and all who knew him considered him a friend. Bill was a mentor to many and especially to his beloved wife Esther, AA2AP. Bill almost exploded with pride the day that Esther passed the 20 WPM code exam to earn her Extra Class license.

I recall Bill walking halfway up a very frozen Milks Road at 4AM, carrying frying pans and breakfast fixings. By 5AM the weary “all-nighter” W2OW contest team was treated to fresh coffee, eggs and sausage. Bill made dozens of friends on the “Early Birds” Net and while he often complained about his computer, he never missed a night on the 2-Meter Packet “Looney Net”. Bill was an avid HF operator and thousands of hams around the world met, chatted with, and became friends of K2MFB.

Bill was an accomplished artist. He loved to paint in both oils and water color. Bill was above all a loving husband, father and grandfather.

Bill loved Esther and I don’t think he ever really recovered from her passing. One beautiful Spring day Bill took me out to his gazebo where he loved to sit and watch the wildlife, feed Rocky and Pierre (the chipmunks he fed daily), and listen to the nearby stream. Bill struggled to point out Esther’s favorite chair and the sweater she wore on chilly days hanging right where she left it on “her” chair.

Bill, we will miss you. Please give Esther a big hug for all of us. — *from Bill, N2BC*

Hamfest Chairs

As a Club we offer our thanks to Jim, KC2JED, for offering to serve as our 2007 Hamfest Chairman. We also thank Bob, KC2DSS, who offered to work with Jim to plan and execute the Hamfest. It goes without saying that we need the funds that the Hamfest brings in to maintain our Club Operations and both Jim and Bob have come through for us.

Now, we need to come through for them! The appropriate requests are being sent to the appropriate Town and Village offices. Once

Meeting (on the 17th) where we will discuss our 2007 Budget Options as prepared by our Treasurer Paul, N2NCB — *73 Ed, KB2SCF*

confirmations are received, activity will kick into the next gear and Jim and Bob will begin working through the “master checklist” that has been formulated through the years. Please, please (and please, again) be willing to help spread the work around. A schedule for planning meetings will soon be announced and we invite you to join us and to help spread the work. All of us look forward to working with all of you!

Christmas/Holiday Party Notes

The BARA, Inc. Christmas/Holiday Party/Meeting was called to order on December 20, 2006 at 6 PM at Russell's Steakhouse in Endicott. Approximately forty members and guests were in attendance with the culinary delights, pumpkin bread, and dessert chocolate chip cookies being well received. Hedy, AA2MU, did her usual outstanding job with room, menu arrangements, door prize acquisitions, and the 50 / 50 all accomplished in her usual holiday spirit — another job well done! An unusual and valued door prize was the antique dining chair, newly caned and donated by Malcolm KC2EOV (Gail Progy was the lucky prize winner). Another highlight of the evening was the presentation of two BARA Service Awards by Jack, WB2GHH.

The first award was presented (in absentia) to Norm McSweyn, N3YKF. Norm performed much of the “grunge” work in the shack including general clean up, throw out, and scrubbing of the floor. He also helped install the three new operating positions after acquiring data from the manufacturer. Without Norm’s effort we would not have been able to get the Shack “up and running” as early as we did.

A second BARA Service Award was presented to Stan Progy, W2EWM. Stan has provided many years of grounds maintenance and project assistance activity. When needed, and without waiting to be asked, Stan kept on top of the mowing. This Fall he stone raked and planted grass in the areas upset by the heavy logging equipment and he also carted off and disposed of the debris picked up from around the immediate shack area. The site has never looked so good.

General thanks were also extended to those present who provided sweat equity to the hilltop clean up, tree trimming, tower and antenna erection, and

road leveling.

All in all, our party was a success and those present enjoyed a good meal, great fellowship and the pleasant absence of any ice or snow. — *DE Jack*, Sometime soon, the US will join the growing list of countries that no longer require Amateur Radio applicants to pass a Morse code test as the entry ticket to HF. Announcement of the pending historic rule change arrived with no fanfare December 15 in an FCC public notice. A full-blown Report and Order (R&O) in the proceeding, *WT Docket 05-235*, followed December 19. The best estimate of when the Morse code requirement will go away officially is sometime in February — 30 days after the R&O appears in the Federal Register.

“We ... believe that the public interest is not served by requiring facility in Morse code when the trend in amateur communications is to use voice and digital technologies for exchanging messages,” the FCC said in its R&O. “Rather, we believe that because the international requirement for telegraphy proficiency has been eliminated, we should treat Morse code telegraphy no differently from other Amateur Service communications techniques.”

The FCC says it deems the current regime of written examinations “sufficient to determine whether a person is qualified to be issued an Amateur Radio operator license.”

The FCC cast aside arguments that Morse ability is advantageous in emergencies, concluding that most emergency communication is handled using voice, data, or video techniques. The Commission also turned away assertions that retaining a Morse requirement would help keep out the bad apples.

“The record is devoid of a demonstrated nexus between Morse code proficiency and on-the-air conduct,” the FCC observed. It concurred with one commenter’s observation that “maintaining the code requirement does not purge Amateur Radio of bad operators. Education and self-policing does.”

The FCC also ordered that all Technician licensees present and future — whether or not they've passed a Morse code test, will get privileges on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters identical to those of Novice licensees. “In eliminating this disparity between Technician and Technician Plus licenses, we are simplifying the Amateur Service licensing structure and promoting regulatory parity,” the FCC said.

The FCC took advantage of the occasion to act on the League's Petition for Partial

WB2GHH

Morse Code Exam Requirement Eliminated by FCC

Reconsideration in the “omnibus” proceeding, *WT Docket 04-140*, calling on the Commission to retain 3620 to 3635 kHz for automatically controlled digital stations by moving the Extra class phone band edge to 3635 kHz. The FCC decided instead to authorize 3585 to 3600 kHz for such operations, and leave the newly expanded phone band intact.

The Commission further amended Part 97 “to authorize Amateur Extra class privileges to all individuals who have been issued a CEPT radio-amateur license by their country of citizenship, and who satisfy other requirements in the Commission's rules.”

Although the FCC’s Morse code decision came as no surprise, it nonetheless revived debate on the issue. The FCC had proposed more than a year ago to drop the Morse code requirement for all license classes. The record in the proceeding, the FCC said, “reflects a division of views in the Amateur Radio community.” After reviewing the more than 3,500 comments and counter-proposals radio amateurs had filed, the Commission stuck with its initial proposal.

Since World Radiocommunication Conference 2003, the UK, Canada, Germany and other countries have dropped their Morse requirements. Sumner said other countries have successfully made the transition to a codeless testing regime, and he doesn’t anticipate problems in the US.

The pending disappearance of the Morse code requirement seems to have rejuvenated the urge to upgrade. ARRL Sales and Marketing Manager Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R, says distribution of General Class license training materials have skyrocketed in the week after the FCC announcement.

The ARRL has posted information relevant to the FCC action in *WT Docket 05-235*, including an FAQ, on its Web site <<<http://www.arrl.org/fcc/morse/>>>. — *from the ARRL Letter for 22 December 2006*

Hamfests

13 JANUARY fires off the 2007 Hamfest Season at the Marathon Civic Center in Marathon, NY. Please support the Skyline Amateur Radio

Club and stop by to meet old friends, to make new ones, and to fight off that “cabin fever”!

24 FEBRUARY brings us the “Horseheads Mini-Fest” at the National Guard Armory in Horseheads, NY. Come early for the best parking and stay late for the best bargains!

January Program

The program for our January General Meeting will be our annual Budget. Please come to hear the proposals and to make your views known. We note that this Budget is not balanced and (as proposed) requires adjustment from our Club Reserves due to increased expenses.

Binghamton Amateur Radio Association, Inc.

P. O. Box 853

Binghamton, New York 13902

First Class

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Club Officers and Committees			
President	Ed Plesnar	KB2SCF	754-3810
Vice President	Jim Lawson	KC2JED	797-1583
Secretary	Blake McCabe	KC2GQX	748-9808
Treasurer	Paul Slocum	N2NCB	687-2057
Directors	Jack Connors	WB2GHH	724-8822
	Warren Marks	KC2NGR	648-6840
	Bob McCabe	KC2DSS	748-9808
	Lee Savidge	WA3EFE	669-4188
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, January 17th

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

Board Meeting

7:00 PM, Wednesday February 7th

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

Exam Session

7:00 PM Monday, January 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

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