

# **BARA** Facts

*Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association*

*May 2007*

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

## **The President's Corner**

Our 2007 Hamfest is come and gone and a very mixed bag it was. First, I would like to publically thank our Chairman Jim, KC2JED, and his assistant Bob, KC2DSS. For a while it looked as if the Hamfest would not happen for lack of a Chairman, so when Jim and Bob stepped in the Fest became possible. Both Jim and Bob deserve our thanks. It's always easy to point out what could have been done differently, but without leaders, nothing would have been done at all!

We also need to thank all the willing hands who pitched in to setup, execute, and tear down. Detailed lists will be in a later issue, but here I want to make note of the help that was received and to remark on the willingness of some of our members to do the work year after year. It's no cakewalk — even for a moderate Fest like ours — and many of our members took time off from work on Friday to help get ready while others spent most of Saturday wearing ticket aprons and directing traffic.

Those are the things that went right and I have heard positive comments about the Hamfest. The Weather was fine, the Flea Market was not too shabby, and people did turn out, although not in the numbers we would have liked. But there were some problems and I won't hide them from you.

Our commercial vendors did not show, although we contacted them personally and made our offers of space as generous as possible. Apparently gas prices and economic considerations defeated us and another Hamfest to the East offered a greater "draw". Publicity and advertising could have been better. It would have been wonderful if one or two members had offered to draft a flyer and to publicize our Hamfest, but we did the best we could with the resources available to us. It didn't help, either, that the signs that Victor, N2LZM, and Bob, WS2U, placed on Friday afternoon vanished sometime overnight. Every single one.

I won't belabor the issue. It is enough to point out again that the Hamfest is our Club Fund Raiser. If we are to continue as a Club with a Shack and a Site and if we are to cover our required expenses without raising our annual dues to an unreasonable level, we must revive the Hamfest or we must seek other sources of revenue. — 73 DE Ed, KB2SCF

## **Records Broken at W2OW**

Our faithful correspondent Jack, WB2GHH, reports that a number of records were quite literally smashed at the W2OW Hilltop Site! *(Continued on Page 3)*

## **Open Items on the Hilltop**

Jack, WB2GHH, was kind enough to make a detailed inspection of our Shack Site on Milks Road and he offers the following list of "Open Issues" at the Shack. If anyone would like to take on one or two of these items and push them to completion, our Club would be most grateful. Just drop a note or give a call to [eplesnar@stny.rr.com](mailto:eplesnar@stny.rr.com) (607-754-3810) so that we know what is being done and who to thank.

1. The Entrance Road has some high spots (for sedans) that require leveling and mitigation.
2. Both tower bases (tower to foundation attachment area) require rust removal and painting.
3. The tower closest to the shack requires further assembly.
4. Near term antenna placement (HF, VHF, UHF) requires definition.
5. Antennas require assembly.
6. Electric fans (removed when we decommissioned the site) need to be located and installed.
7. Antennas to room patch block requires reassembly.
8. Lead in for 40-meter wire antenna needs to be identified and laid out.

9. Antenna and rotor cables require install off ground to prevent damage (not a good idea to have them lying on the surface)?
10. Shack clean up where “little beasts of the night” have feasted on paper products. For this task, you should wear gloves and a dust mask and keep the dust down.
11. Did someone retain the metal box that can be used for paper items.
12. Anyone know of an effective shack “beast protection” device?
13. The siding on the power meter side needs to be repaired. The first three to six inches has been eaten.

With regard to the small “commercial” shack and 97-foot tower:

- a. Years of mice and other dung have accumulated in the shack. Again: dust mask, gloves and gentle removal to keep dust to a minimum.
- b. In general that shack is in poor shape. The tower shack threshold and base section must be replaced and the shack door requires repair.
- c. Power needs for that shack must be addressed
- d. An Antenna Plan for the 97-foot tower needs to be laid out.
- e. Wireless interconnection from the 97-foot tower has been suggested and needs to be decided.

### **Skywarn Notes**

The program for our April General Meeting consisted of Skywarn Training. Dave Nicosia, KC2PLQ, from the National Weather Service in Binghamton gave an updated presentation on Weather Spotting. As usual, some material from previous years was repeated, but there was enough new material to satisfy “old hands” while the basics were covered for beginners.

As Warning Coordinator Metrologist, Dave explained that the National Weather Service (NWS) is a part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) and is a part of the Department of Commerce. A key responsibility of the Service is Public Safety and Warnings. When conditions warrant, the NWS reports are used by Public Service and commercial outlets to inform the general public. Emergency Management coordinates a response and the public acts on the information. Skywarn is an important part of the system as it provides Ground Truth Reports that confirm predictions, add authority to the notices, and enhance

the credibility of radar-based predictions.

In Broome County and the surrounding area we experience about thirty thunderstorm days per year. Typically these days experienced between May and September, although these events can occur off-season. Predictions based on current conditions and radar plots provide a picture of what conditions *may* be experienced, but the conditions above the ground may be very different from what is occurring at ground level. In addition, the time required to sweep and plot the horizon by radar introduces a delay: by the time a plot is complete, a fast-moving system may reduce the prediction to history. Ground reports by Skywarn Spotters complete the picture and assist the metrologists in adjusting their models.

As a practical example, Dave cited the storm events experienced in Northeastern Pennsylvania last December. Predictions developed by the Binghamton NWS office were confirmed via Amateur Radio in real time. As a result, warnings were refined and transmitted to the public and were able to cite specific reported activity that added urgency to their reports.

### **Electronic Distribution of the *Facts***

The cost of producing our Club Newsletter and the Electronic Distribution of the *BARA Facts* were thoroughly discussed at recent Board and General Meetings and our Treasurer Paul, N2NCB, believes that he could easily send electronic notification of the *Facts* and Membership Renewal if he had e-Mail Addresses for our members.

As an experiment we agreed that we would try to get e-Mail Addresses for all members and that we would ask anyone who wishes to replace their “paper” *Facts* with a notice that the electronic version has been posted on the BARA Website to make that preference known.

First, if you have an e-Mail Address, we would greatly appreciate it if you would send an e-Mail to n2ncb@stny.rr.com. If the address you wish to use is different from the address you are using to send the message, please note that fact in the body of the e-Mail.

Second, if you prefer a notice that the *Facts* is ready and posted at our Club Website, make a note of that in the e-Mail as well.

**Note that we are not discontinuing the *BARA Facts* mailings. We are just offering an option to those members who do not need a paper copy and who would be satisfied with downloading and printing a copy from our website!**

---

## Memories of the Wire

In an age of “instant news” where Websites and Blogs report the news “as it happens”, it is easy to forget that this was not always the case and that fifteen (even ten) or twenty years ago the latest news came “off the wire” by way of heavy, noisy, and mechanically wonderful Teletype Printers spliced to the wires of the Associated Press, United Press International, Reuters, and other services.

Indeed, the rattling Teletype with its spool of flimsy yellow paper was so much a symbol of news that it was used by more than one station as a symbol of up-to-date news and information.

I remember my first hands-on experience with a Teletype: Our College Radio Station had one machine that connected to world over a leased phone line by way of a large metal box full of relays. You could hear the ticking of the relays inside the box as the printer thundered out the news. Inch by inch the yellow spool fed over the typebar as solenoids pounded out the words. Thick black ink soaked the ribbon that impressed news on the paper.

Twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week the machine pounded on. The only permitted variation was the occasional “hot” item preceded by a series of bells to alert the receiver and the very infrequent silences precipitated by jams or the need to change paper or ribbon. For the most part the press thundered on and every half hour or so the announcer on duty would tear off several feet of accumulated news and then, using a ruler as a guide, rip off the articles by topic: National, International, Sports, Weather, Features, and Summaries. I remember scanning through the text, reading of events in distant and exotic places. Some would be plucked out to be read on the hour, others would be spiked on hooks on the newsroom wall.

For the operator “on duty” silence or a diminished crescendo in the “Wire Room” between the Studio and the Hallway was as the tolling bell of doom: We would race to the machine which, more often than not, had jammed the paper feed. A solid mass of waste paper would be compressed between the typebar and the exit slot as the motor drive compacted the mess even tighter. I believe that the machine would literally have exploded before the motor stalled! But, with an oath and cry, we would leap for the machine and clear the jam — yards of shredded paper would be cast into the wastebasket until, hands blackened by the greasy ink, we retired victorious with order restored.

Those of us who were fortunate to tend the Teletype felt the pulse of the world and felt an odd responsibility as we picked the items to be read “on the hour” after the feed from Mutual ran. And later, as we listened to the “other” outlets or read the next edition of the paper, we gained an appreciation for the vast differential between the news of the world and the news that was *reported* of the world.

Those days are gone now. The march of progress has silenced the machines. The low hum of a PC and the glow of a monitor are the sterile replacements for the glorious sound of the “wire”. The Newsroom is quieter, more orderly, and efficient. I miss the noise!

---

## Scarborough Reef Approved

By Way of the ARRL *Letter for* 11 May we learn that the ARRL DXCC Desk has approved the BS7H Scarborough Reef 2007 operations for DXCC credit. For more information, visit the DXCC Web page <<<http://www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc>>>.

---

## Records

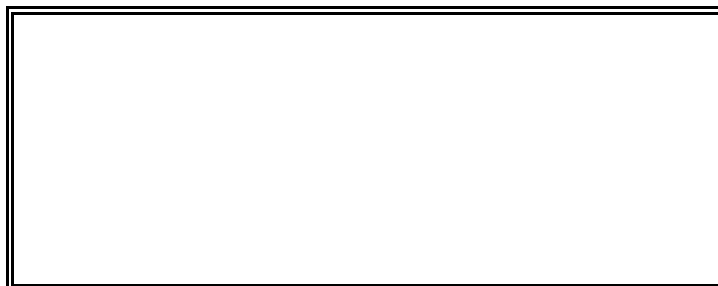
*(Continued from page 1)*

You may have missed the record smashing events that recently took place at the W2OW hilltop site. You do know the site is fully operational on HF don't you? It is ready and waiting for YOU to come up and splash out some RF. Too bad we missed the chance (there will be another) to put a VHF/UHF antenna on top of the present tower mast. Someone, not present at the tower take down, fix the antenna and right the tower operation, pointed out that “we shud ah...” There must be an after action Murphy rule that states that “...after an event there will always be at least one ‘you shud ah’ statement made.” Oh well, that's how the RF scatters, a good idea but a bit late. We are looking for other ideas for consideration so a tower antenna plan can be developed for this season. Here we are with a 100-foot tower (actually 97-feet, its the old commercial tower) and we don't have anything on it. Your ideas are solicited and welcome.

Oh, getting back to the record breaking details. Well, I'll have to ask your forgiveness. The records in question were 331/3 RPM relics (Johnny Cash Sings the Songs that Made Him Famous; Berlin After Dark; Songs That Brought Sunshine into the Depression and others. Too bad. But there are other RF records waiting for you to “break”. Why not come up and try. — *DE Jack, WB2GHH*

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

First Class



<b>Club Officers and Committees</b>			
<b>President</b>	<b>Ed Plesnar</b>	<b>KB2SCF</b>	<b>754-3810</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Jim Lawson</b>	<b>KC2JED</b>	<b>797-1583</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Blake McCabe</b>	<b>KC2GQX</b>	<b>748-9808</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Paul Slocum</b>	<b>N2NCB</b>	<b>687-2057</b>
<b>Directors</b>	<b>Jack Connors</b>	<b>WB2GHH</b>	<b>724-8822</b>
	<b>Warren Marks</b>	<b>KC2NGR</b>	<b>648-6840</b>
	<b>Bob McCabe</b>	<b>KC2DSS</b>	<b>748-9808</b>
	<b>Lee Savidge</b>	<b>W3EFE</b>	<b>669-4188</b>
<b>W2OW Trustee</b>	<b>Mel Snitchler</b>	<b>WE2K</b>	<b>723-9612</b>
<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>Ed Plesnar</b>	<b>KB2SCF</b>	<b>754-3810</b>

**Next General Meeting**  
7:30 PM, Wednesday, May 16th  
Town of Binghamton Town Hall, 279 Park Avenue, South of the  
Ross Park Entrance

**Board Meeting**  
7:00 PM, Wednesday June 6th  
Broome Community College Campus, Office of Emergency  
Services (West Side of Campus)

**Exam Session**  
7:00 PM Monday, May 28th  
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



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

e-Mail Address: w2ow@arrl.net



Our Printing Sponsor: Unicorn Electronics, Valley  
Plaza Drive, Johnson City, NY