

BARA

Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

March 2008

Website: <http://w2ow.org> OR <http://www.wtsn.binghamton.edu/bara>

The President's Corner

Every year there seem to be fewer and fewer amateur radio operators. The internet and cell phones clearly have overshadowed some important aspects of long-distance communication that were previously the exclusive domain of ham radio. But I am here to tell you that the skills that amateur radio operators bring to the world of technology are still quite vital — and I'm living proof!

I'm currently on my third career. I started my adult life off as a professional archaeologist, doing contract work (in advance of state and federal construction projects) in the northeastern U.S. for 14 years. Yes, it was interesting at times, but oftentimes tedious as well (one thing you'll never see on the Discovery Channel is someone digging thousands of holes over five months, and finding nothing — but I've done exactly that!). Working outdoors was often pleasant — and just as often not (those of you who have worked outdoors in rain, cold and snow know what I'm talking about).

Some years ago I decided to settle down and get married. Having a wife meant that I could no longer spend months away from home at a time, so I found a job working at (what was then) Lockheed Martin in their computer hardware lab, doing setups and repairs. Luckily, as a lifelong electronics hobbyist and someone who had worked with computers beginning in the 1970s, I had a skill to fall back on. But the lab I was working in was understaffed and severely overworked; I got pretty stressed out, so after six years there I started weighing my options. But I didn't have any education or experience that would lend itself to any other career I could imagine — or did I?

By this time Lockheed Martin had sold our plant to BAE Systems, and a friend of mine who worked there encouraged me to apply for an open EMI Technician position. For those of you are aren't familiar

with the term, EMI stands for Electromagnetic Interference. It is vitally important that the products that they make (controls systems for jets, rockets and ground vehicles) do not give off radio interference, and do not fail in the presence of interference from other devices. To that end, they have labs set up with special "shield" rooms to keep stray radio waves out (for pristine measurements of interference being generated), and to keep the high levels of RF energy generated there (for testing immunity to interference) from harming the personnel. The technicians are the ones who get to play in the shield rooms with racks full of expensive equipment, like signal generators, high-power amplifiers and spectrum analyzers (the Engineers, on the other hand, get to sit at their desks and write reports).

I didn't think I'd qualify for such a high-tech position, but at friend's insistence I applied. After numerous interviews with Engineers, managers, and the other Technicians, I learned that I had gotten the position! And the main reason: my familiarity with radio waves and the electromagnetic spectrum, owing to my background in ham radio. It turns out that there are no formal degrees nor training programs for the kind of work EMI Technicians do; it's a matter of starting with the right skills, and learning the ropes as you go along. Although my background in math and radio theory isn't the hottest (it is improving as I gain experience), my familiarity with radio technology was deemed to be an adequate starting point for further developing my skills in this field.

Not everyone getting involved in amateur radio is going to find a job like mine. But the knowledge, experience and skills obtained in becoming a ham are vital to a growing technological field. As we approach the second decade of the 21st century, more and more devices are abandoning wires in favor of wireless technology, including cellphones, internet connections,

and a growing array of remote-controlled devices (think automobile keychain fobs, garage door openers, cordless phones, etc.). There is a growing, not a shrinking, need for the knowledge and skills that are an integral part of amateur radio operations, providing yet another reason (in addition to emergency communications, which I discussed in last month's column) that amateur radio has much to offer in today's world. — 73, *DE allen lutins, KC2KLC*

Hamfest Coming

All Members are reminded that the 2008 BARA Hamfest will be held on Saturday the 3rd of May in The Tioga County Fairground (aka Marvin Park) across from the Price Chopper Plaza on Route 17C in Owego.

This event is our only major Revenue Source for the year and we need the help of all BARA Members to make it a success. Although we have been running the Hamfest long enough that the details are almost second nature, we need YOUR help to pull it off. Between setup and tear-down, there are many places where a few hours of YOUR time can make a big difference in the quality of the Hamfest. Please consider lending an hand with Tickets, Crowd Control, Setup, Tear-Down, or wherever else you are needed and please come to our next meeting to let us know where you are willing to help.

As always, we will have a work session to get things ready the Friday before the Hamfest. If you can stop by Marvin Park on Friday the 2nd of May around Noon to help setup, your presence will be very welcome. We will be congregating around the 4-H Building. Bring work gloves and a broom to help sweep out the facility. We will also need help setting up the Public Address System, carrying Picnic Tables, and with whatever else seems necessary.

Publicity is always important and we are asking you to help spread the word. Included in this issue of the *BARA Facts* is a Hamfest Flyer and we ask you to help out by posting it or passing it on to a friend. Please help us to get the word out and please help out to make the 2008 BARA Hamfest a success.

Review: 22 Radio Receiver Projects for the Evil Genius

With the proliferation of "For Dummies" books geared towards teaching the basics of just about everything under the sun, it appears that the TAB Electronics imprint of the McGraw Hill Publishing Empire plans to target the somewhat more proficient, professional/hobbyist class of readers with the "Evil

Genius" series. This volume happened to cross my radar as I scanned the shelves at Barnes & Noble looking for a basic Radio Book to recommend to a class I presented recently. I saw, paged through, and I purchased because it seemed just the ticket.

In the first thirty-eight (of 281 pages, including index) 22 Radio Projects covers the basics of radio, components, and soldering. Although this might not seem much coverage for so vast a field, the presentation is adequate because the projects that follow add to the presentation and "flesh out" earlier details. A short section at the very end of the book suggests possible sources of parts and supplies, very handy for those readers who are not served locally by an establishment such as our own Unicorn Electronics.

The 22 Projects themselves are a grab bag from the radio spectrum. Beginning with the traditional Crystal Receiver, things progress through the TRF Receiver and beyond to Satellite Receivers and the Digital World. It is to be admitted that some of the designs are based on Ramsey and similar kits and that the same instructions are repeated and repeated again, but some beginners may skip to "their" project, so that is a forgivable shortcoming. It is also worth noting that this in itself can be an advantage if the book is used as a class text with one or more of the projects purchased "off the shelf" for the lab portion of the class.

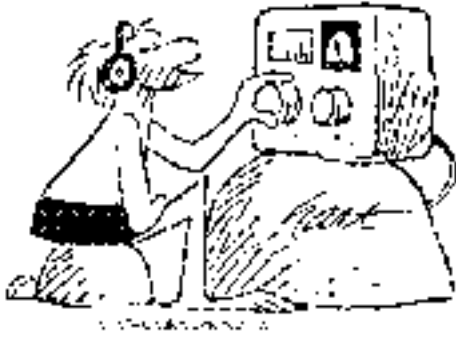
If you are looking for a "project book" for yourself or for a friend, 22 Radio Receiver Projects for the Evil Genius (ISBN 978-0-07-148929-4) is well worth checking out.

One final point: After buying the book and beginning to read it, I found that it was written by one of our own local Hams — Tom Petruzzellis, WA2ANG.

Wind Up Radio

Our useless trivia item for the month is the wind-up radio detector.

In the early days of Wireless when Spark was King and the Crystal Detector a nervous and uncertain thing (protected by litigation and fussy adjustment) the Marconi Company actually implemented a wind-up Magnetic Detector (the Maggie) which used a clockwork motor to pull a continuous metal tape past what amounted to a write/read pair of coils and a magnet to "Clear" the signals. It was effectively a small tape-recording system based on the 1900 invention of a magnetic recording system by the Danish Engineer Vlademar Poulsen....



BARA

Hamfest

*The Binghamton Amateur Radio Association, Inc.
invites you to join us at*

**The Tioga County Fairgrounds (AKA Marvin Park) on
Route 17C in Owego**

on

Saturday, May 3rd, 2008

*For the BARA Hamfest — one of the longest-running Hamfests in Central New York
presented by the oldest Amateur Radio Club in the Triple Cities*

**Setup 6:00 AM — Gate Opens at 8:00 AM
Admission: \$5.00 — Tailgating: \$2.00
Indoor Tables \$10.00 Each**

*Food Served all day with Prize Drawings throughout the Morning. Grand Prize Drawing at
12:30 and 50/50 Drawing as well!*

**Directions: From Route 17 East or West take Exit 64 to Route 17C West.
Follow 17C West through Owego to the Fairgrounds (Marvin Park) right
across from the Supermarket Plaza**

**For additional details, please see our Website
<http://w2ow.org>**

or write to

BARA

P.O. Box 853

Binghamton, NY 13902-0853

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

First Class

Club Officers and Committees			
President	allen lutins	kc2klc	729-4817
Vice President	Jack Connors	WB2GHH	724-8822
Secretary	Don Pierce	AB2HT	
Treasurer	Paul Slocum	N2NCB	687-2057
Directors	John Carrington	WB2SGS	648-8364
	Warren Marks	KC2NGR	648-6840
	Bill Jaker	WB8RAE	785-5361
	John Rudy	WB2FQZ	669-4308
W2OW Trustee	Mel Snitchler	WE2K	723-9612
Newsletter	Ed Plesnar	KB2SCF	754-3810

Next General Meeting
7:30 PM, Wednesday, March 19th
Town of Binghamton Town Hall, 279 Park Avenue, South of the
Ross Park Entrance

Board Meeting
7:00 PM, Wednesday April 2nd
Broome Community College Campus, Office of Emergency
Services (West Side of Campus)

Exam Session
7:00 PM Monday, March 31st
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