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# BARA

## Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

May 2008

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

## The President's Corner

*"We are entrusted with radio spectrum that has enormous value -- which means that there is lots of competition for it, competition that would take it away from us unless we constantly demonstrate our value through public service and constantly grow our numbers." - Bill Coleman (N2BC)*

Bill Coleman was my predecessor as BARA President, and I found this quote of his to be one of the most profound things I've ever heard or read regarding our hobby. I have to admit – I am frankly a bit pessimistic about the long-term viability of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association. It should be painfully aware to all that we are losing members far faster than we are gaining them, and it is difficult to get the critical mass of members together to pull off events such as Field Day.

Luckily, a sufficient and dedicated core of volunteers pulled off a wonderful job running the recent Ham Fest. The event proved quite successful thanks to all the folks who came out that day and for setup the day before (I trust someone else will fill you in on the details in another article). James Lawson (KC2JED) did an admirable job of organizing the event, although he was clearly concerned about the meager number of folks who committed in advance to volunteer.

Despite my concerns about membership

numbers and participation, I remain dedicated to BARA. I have a full-time job (9-hour days), am a musician in three active bands, and own an older house that requires a fair amount of attention, among other things. Just today, after getting off work, I repaired my bicycle, rode it to Wilson Hospital to visit a friend there, did some gardening, went food shopping, and put some laundry in . . . yet I'm still making time to write this column, too, because I believe that maintaining a newsletter is an important club activity. But to me, having a local organization like BARA, where I can interact with and learn from fellow radio-electronic enthusiasts, is worth the effort. To this end, I've volunteered to be President, and (as I promised earlier this year) am actively working to reach out to other radio organizations in the area.

Do you share my dedication to and pride in our radio club? If so, what are *you* doing to keep it a viable organization? I know people are busy these days, but I don't believe everyone is busier than I am. In fact, I'm willing to bet that many of our members are retired – seems like they should have a *little* time on their hands, no? We have several events planned, including Field Day, and perhaps a showing at the local Spiedi Fest / Balloon Rally. I hope I can count on enough people to come together to make this happen.

And if we are to minimize the effects of our shrinking numbers, we need to recruit new members. I admit that I'm not the most creative

person when it comes to envisioning how to this, but I do know that we need to emphasize the relevance of our hobby to modern issues such as emergency communications (cell towers *do* succumb to dwindling battery power during extended power outages) and wireless technologies. It is especially important to target young people, whether at Scout and summer camps, or in schools. If you have any ideas along these lines, let me know! — 73! *de allen lutins, KC2KLC*

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## **ARRL FIELD DAY 2008 NOI (Notice Of Intent)**

Are YOU thinking about ARRL Field Day yet? Why not? It is hopeful that a large contingent of Binghamton Amateur Radio Association members and guests will demonstrate their emergency communication skills during the 2008 ARRL Field Day period. As always, the event is scheduled for the last full (rainy) weekend in June. This year the action starts at 1800 UTC Saturday (June 28 th) and ends at 2100 UTC Sunday (June 29th).

What is Field Day? Field Day is that day when HAMS in the USA test themselves and their equipment in an unfamiliar environment under emergency conditions. What does that mean? Well, first you pick a location not normally utilized. This year the club has decided to stay close to home and use the beautiful natural surroundings at the Milks Road W2OW operations center. A wide selection of camping sites for those who want to “stay over”; many places to set up your station under cover (tenting; vehicle, whatever); trees of appropriate size from which antennas can be decorated. And best of all a very open field with a midnight view that has few challengers.

Why mention Field Day so early? Well, certain preparations must be made — by YOU — if the event is to be a personal and club success. First you must commit to participate. Then YOU must start checking your emergency “stuff” and verifying its operational status prior to the big weekend. “Oh, you mean I don’t just show up and operate for a few hours using someone else’s or the club’s stuff?” Well, you could do that, but as indicated earlier, the event is intended to test YOUR skills and YOUR equipment. During the course of the event relief operators are always welcome. Each of us (amateur radio licensees) should be able to provide timely and effective communications during a communication emergency. ARRL Field Day affords us the chance (and challenge) to test local (VHF, UHF) and longer range (HF) capabilities. Transceivers (manuals) , power supplies, batteries, charger, cables, connectors, fuses, antennas, anchor lines, generators, tools, personal need items, tenting, chow, and on and on. Why not get to the Milks Road W2OW site ASAP and size up potential parking spots best suited for closeness to your operating position (tent?) and antenna supports. Don’t forget BARA has a 97 foot tower with a pull line and pulley at its apex just waiting for an antenna to be hoisted. Might be just the place for a 160 meter folded dipole fed with 450 ohm open line.

This annual preparedness exercise is a good time to get together with other HAMS. Plan now to work closely together to set up a complete emergency radio communications center. I can’t recall a field day that we didn’t have excitement. Oh yes, Murphy isn’t invited but he always shows up. Let me know if you are planning to participate in order that a guesstimate can be made for BARA provided items. *More facts next FACTS — DE WB2GHH Field Day 2008 Coordinator*

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## **Six Meters**

### **By Bob Myers, K2TV**

Every so often I put my rig on the six meter calling frequency 50.125 and listen for a while. Usually I don't hear anything. After listening for a while I call a short CQ with my antenna pointed south west. Most time I either don't get an answer or a local station will come back and we slide up a few kHz off the calling frequency for a ragchew. The other day after calling CQ on 50.125 a station from Florida came back and we exchanged signal reports, names and grid squares. As fast as the band opened, it closed. That is why six meters is called the "Magic Band". A local station then called me and we had a nice chat, hoping the band would open again. It

never did. That episode reminded me that sporadic E skip season is about to start. The season opens up about this time of the year and continues to mid-August. If you have a rig with a six meter position on the band switch, it might be a good time to try it out. First you need an antenna and on SSB and CW the convention is to use a horizontally polarized antenna. A

vertical antenna works fine when the band opens up because once the signal is bounced either by the ionosphere or a sporadic E cloud, it becomes randomly polarized anyway. A simple dipole is easy to build and makes an easy way to get your feet wet on the band. There are beacon stations

located below 50.090 MHz and they will appear when the band is open. CW stations usually operate from 50.090 to 50.100. SSB stations use upper sideband and operate from 50.125 (the calling frequency) up to 50.250 or so when the band opens. The DX window is 50.100 to 50.120 MHz with 50.110 being the

DX calling frequency. AM stations hang out on 50.400 MHz and the FM calling frequency is 50.525 MHz. When the band opens, the QSOs are fairly rapid and signal reports and grid square numbers are usually exchanged. We [K2TV — ghh) are in grid square FN30. Give it a try. — *Reprinted with permission of K2TV; from the May 2008 Issue of ESS (Empire Slow Speed) Bulletin) DE WB2GHH*

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## **Soaring Day**

### **An Upcoming Special Event**

The Amateur Radio Association of the Southern Tier will sponsor a special on the air event commemorating the National Soaring Museum's Community Soaring Day on Saturday, September 20th and Sunday the 21st. Activities will begin at 9:00 AM in cabin 5 on Harris Hill. Operations on both 40 and 20 meters are planned. All amateur radio operators are invited to participate regardless of license class. Every one attending will have the opportunity to operate on all frequencies. Food and beverages will be served on Saturday. For additional information contact Ralph Ferrara, WA2NTK. (607) 857-6985 or wa2ntk AT wa2ntk DOT com — Thanks es 73 Ralph, WA2NTK

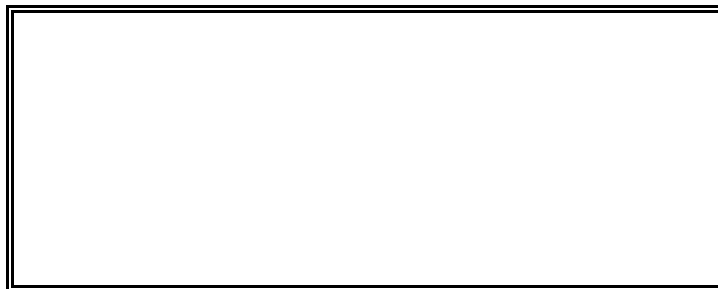
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## **Empire State Games**

We are still in need of Communicators for the Empire State Games in July! Please contact Mel, WE2K if you are interested in volunteering to help out with the games. An application with further details is available on our Club Website at <<www.w20w.org>>.

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>allen lutins</b>	<b>kc2klc</b>	<b>729-4817</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Jack Connors</b>	<b>WB2GHH</b>	<b>724-8822</b>
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	<b>Warren Marks</b>	<b>KC2NGR</b>	<b>648-6840</b>
	<b>Bill Jaker</b>	<b>WB8RAE</b>	<b>785-5361</b>
	<b>John Rudy</b>	<b>WB2FQZ</b>	<b>669-4308</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 21st  
Town of Binghamton Town Hall, 279 Park Avenue, South of the  
Ross Park Entrance

*Board Meeting*  
7:00 PM, Wednesday June 4th  
Broome Community College Campus, Office of Emergency  
Services (West Side of Campus)

*Exam Session*  
7:00 PM Monday, May 26th  
Vestal Public Library, Route 434 Vestal

*BARA Dues*  
\$18/year Single Member; \$27/year Family

*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**



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