

President's Corner

May 2008

"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! -allen lutins KC2KLC