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# **BARA** Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

February 2009

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

## **The President's Corner**

Here I am in 2009, as BARA President again. Most of you are unaware that BARA is not the first amateur radio club for which I've served as an officer – that distinction would go to FLARC, the Fair Lawn Amateur Radio Club.

Fair Lawn is the suburban New Jersey town (15 minutes west of New York City) where I grew up. I joined FLARC in 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade, (I'd been a shortwave listener since junior high, and was looking to get my ham ticket), and as a high school Junior I became FLARC Secretary (the first post I held at BARA as well). By that time I had indeed gotten my Novice ticket.

FLARC meetings were a bit different from BARA's. For one thing, we met every week, but the business meeting was only held once month. After the business meetings, or on the other three Fridays of the month, we would hang out & talk about radios, electronics, etc., and fire up the HF radio. You see, we had the luxury of having ample, cozy meeting space in the same building where our equipment was set up (it was shared space, provided by the town to several community groups) – and a nice tower outside. One of our members served a couple of stints at the South Pole, and we were occasionally able to make contact with him there (ah, the good old days of high sunspot counts!) We also had a lot of test equipment set up in another room (and the attic looked like a hamfest, stuffed full of spare parts & tubes & such), so I was able to enhance my electronics knowledge.

The important thing about FLARC meetings was that we didn't exist solely to conduct business – we also actively participated in the hobby (with discussions and on-air activity) when we met.

At the last BARA meeting, no formal program was scheduled, so Tim Siglin (WA2LTD) kindly provided an impromptu discussion on an odd-looking

'show-and-tell' item he brought in (funkiest tube seen in a long time!). Afterwards, a number of us hung out for a while discussing all manner of stream-of-consciousness topics that the discussion spawned. And that took me back to my old FLARC days. **THIS** is what an amateur radio club was meant to be – personal interaction, where we get to enhance our knowledge of the hobby, and also trade war stories about operating radios, blowing up equipment, getting shocked by RF circuitry, and all sorts of other good times provided by our craft.

I would like to see this happen more often at BARA meetings. We've reserved one night a month to get together; why not hang out for a little while after the formal business is finished, and shoot the breeze? Me and the other 'youngsters' (hey, it's all relative, right? I have a *lot* to learn from the old timers. And when the weather's nicer, hopefully there'll be several folks up for taking the short drive up to the shack site and actually getting on the air. There's no substitute for having seasoned operators at the controls, conveying their knowledge and tips to the rest of us! — 73 de allen  
*lutins KC2KLC*

## **May Your Key be Forever Straight**

**A Ham Radio Saga ©2009 by William B. Jaker**

*NOTE: With this issue BARA FACTS commences the continuing saga of Omar Doradious, W2UWU. Omar carries on nearly his entire contact with others of the human race via his amateur radio. This means his view of the world may be at variance with that of a non-ham, or even a semi-ham (that is, those who hold an amateur license and communicate by radio but also enjoy other forms of interpersonal contact). Much of the time, however, Omar the Ham Hermit isn't much different than you and me.*

How come the New Year always seems to begin on Straight Key Night? No sooner do I dig my old hunk o' brass out of the junk box than the rest of the world,

including some hams, throws itself off the deep end of December. I'm just left alone here in the shack to pen a new year into the logbook, plug in my old straight key and tune up.

*Diddley-dah, diddley-dah, diddley-dah...* The CW portion of the bands ought to have a sub-portion reserved for flat keys, and maybe a few kc's set aside for flat fists. *Diddley-dah, diddley-dah, diddley-dah...*

Seven o'clock arrives. That's ØØØØz in Greenwich. Londoners mob Trafalgar Square, horning and wailing out the old, blasting in the new. But for me there is no such dull merriment, no falling ball in Times Square, no old wine bottles tossed from Roman windows, no gunshots into the night sky. My auld acquaintances are down here on 80, or maybe 40 or 20. Or maybe on 10.1 MHz? Might I never be brought to mind?

*CQ SKN. CQ SKN.* Pound, pound, pound. I am truly, literally, digital. The simple instrument blocks the grid, keys the transmitter, sends waves into space with each quiver of my fingers. The funny hats, champagne and wild delirium sweeping the world to the beat of the boogaloo do not penetrate my shack. Nor am I touched by electronic keyers nor even the dubious advances of the Vibroplex. Rather am I linked all the way to Samuel Morse and his worthy successors. *CQ SKN. CQ SKN.* Pound, pound, pound... I listen, expecting to hear "What hath God wrought?"

*CQ SKN DE W2UWU AR.* Pause and listen.

*W2UWU W2UU* (that could be me) *DE KØJ V 55 KØJ. J. K.*

*KØJ?* (that may really be his call) *DE W2UWU TNX ES HPY NW YR. UR SKN 567 567* (I made a New Year's resolution to give honest reports from now on). *HW U LIKE UR STRAIGHT KEY? I USE AN ANTIQUE HR – RADIO SHACK VINTAGE 1977 – IT HAS ONE MOVING PART AND NO ICS TO ROAST HI – SO HW CPY OM? KØJ ? DE W2UWU KN*

*R R F W22W DE KØJ?B, T TKS YR QVO OO – NNCE WEX RAID ZUG - HW? ? – I FIKE 55 – I L I K I – I LIKA SKN – FB ØØMT – NXT YR I WRK SSB WIT CARBON MIC HI HI II II II – 83 ES HFPY NW YR K*

It could have been key-clicks, but I swear I heard the sound of corks popping between each letter.

## Changes at the Facts

For the last fifteen years or so (if not longer), Hedy, AA2MU has kindly and faithfully taken care of getting the printed copy of the *Facts* out and in the mail. She has patiently put up with the foibles and idiosyncracies

of a series of editors and she has never complained about deadlines or anything connected with the job. But all things run their course and come to an end and last December she asked that we find someone else to cover the job. You really can't fault her for wanting to reclaim a little time for her other activities and I for one salute her for all she has done in the past.

So, who is picking up the job? Bill, KB2SIN, was kind enough to offer to pick up where Hedy had left off and are going to see how that works out. There will be a few bumps, I'm sure, since I live in Vestal and Bill lives in Port Crane. But he was ready and I am willing. (Parenthetically, I would like to thank the several other members who called to offer their help. Since I had already accepted Bill's offer, I had to decline with thanks.)

This change, by the way, is not the reason for the *Facts* running so late this month. That falls squarely on my own shoulders. Between the day job and other commitments, the last few months have been busy and I have not been as prompt with the *Facts* as I would like.

Finally, the White Space. You may have noticed some extra "white space" in the *Facts* lately. That area is reserved for the articles that *could* be written. Seriously, the contributions of WB2GHH, WB2SGS, and now WB8RAE are appreciated and K2KLC is prompt and pertinent and I try to fill in the remaining space, but the pickings have become pretty slim. I check out the material in the ARRL Letter and I keep my eye open for Ham Radio-related material, but the pickings are getting slim. If anyone "out there" has something on the "back burner", then "turn up the heat" and I'll "work with you" to crank out an article (note the

clever use of quotation marks to pad out that line — **I could have resorted to a larger font**, but I didn't. We do have standards here at the *Facts*, low thought they might be.

Well, that's the end of the sermon from Eddie the Editor for this month. See you soon!



Binghamton Amateur Radio Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 853  
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*First Class*

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Club Officers and Committees			
President	allen lutins	kc2klc	729-4817
Vice President	James Lawson	KC2JED	
Secretary	Tom Siglin	WA2LTD	
Treasurer	Paul Slocum	N2NCB	687-2057
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	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, January 18th  
Town of Binghamton Town Hall, 279 Park Avenue, South of the  
Ross Park Entrance

*Board Meeting*

7:00 PM, Wednesday March 4th  
Conference Room, WSKG Studios, 501 Gates Road, Vestal

*Exam Session*

7:00 PM Monday, February 23rd  
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**

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