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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

January 2009

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

The President's Corner

Season's greetings and a happy new year! I'm looking forward to serving as BARA President for another term, and hoping we have another successful year in 2009. Yes, we've had some disappointments and misfortune (most notably our members who've gone silent key), but I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect on the things that went well last year, including:

- Good attendance and a wonderful time at the annual picnic;
- A rather successful and fun-filled hamfest;
- A joyous and well-attended holiday party (with a new location that appeared to be universally appreciated);
- A series of varied and interesting programs at our general meetings;
- Fun, entertainment and the opportunity to provide community service at the Empire State Games;
- A wonderful field day experience at the BARA shack.

These are things that can't be pulled off nor appreciated by a single individual – rather, they come to fruition and benefit us because we choose to support our club. I am especially grateful to those individuals whose extra effort helped make these things possible – including Paul (N2NCB) and Jack (WB2GHH), our active officers; John (WB2SGS), Bill (WB8RAE) and Warren (KC2NGR), our Directors, John (WB2FQZ), who did double-duty as Director and as Shack Coordinator; James (KC2JED), our Hamfest Coordinator; Ed (KB2SCF), our Newsletter editor; and Hedy (AA2MU) and Ford (AB2HS), who made our Holiday Party such a delight. There are many other people working behind the scenes to augment our hobby and our club, and my appreciation goes out to them as well.

The past year was one of great strides in amateur radio for me personally as well. For the first time in my

life I acquired a rig with voice capability, and became an active ham again after a 27 year lull (the recent Skywarn Recognition Day helped me nab a few more stations needed for my WAS!). I also got to travel to England for five weeks because of my relatively new job as an electromagnetic interference technician, a position I owe primarily to my background in amateur radio.

I always love to hear from my fellow members; I can be reached via email at allen@lutins.org (the email address with my callsign is no longer active) or at 607-729-4817. — *73 de allen lutins KC2KLC*

NOEE and the Wayward Tower

Long ago in a hamlet far, far, away freezing rain coated all of downtown Chenango Forks, NY and the suburbs with a very heavy load of ice. The road to my QTH was unsafe for travel until, after many hours, the township's ice and snow mavers were able to clear the way. The fields, trees and rooftops were covered with ice as well. My generator provided electric power at my home for the duration of the localized blackout.

When I was able to check on my forty foot tower I found it was no exception to the icing. The two meter beam at the very top of the mast was coated but not damaged and the tri-bander radials had only the slightest droop due to the added weight. The coaxial cables and the low voltage line to the rotator on the other hand were severed and lying in an undignified icy mass at the foot of the tower.

Spring came and went as did summer and fall. The top ten feet of the tower began to list to the starboard and soon a medium strength but capricious wind could make the top heavy section jerk spasmodically and I feared I would soon have tri-bander radials entering the sanctity of my rather cluttered attic.

The day after Thanksgiving I stopped by the “Downtown Chenango Forks Haircutters, Inc.” to have my graying locks trimmed. When she is not tending bar

at Davy's Last Chance Saloon (also in downtown Chenango Forks, NY) Chelsea, being a most excellent barber, can be found in her barber shop. We were chit-chatting about the local gossip like: were the Williams brothers in the Broome County Jail, was Davy selling carp fillets at his fish-fry, did she, Chelsea, ever sell her talking dog... you know, just hometown stuff. I asked her if she knew anyone with a bucket truck that I could hire to take my tower down. She suggested I call Roger Jung (no "e") from Castle Creek a few miles southwest of Chenango Forks. I knew Roger was in the landscaping business, but did not realize he had a bucket truck. In the Air Force Roger was nicknamed "Noee" because he was forever spelling his name to officers and noncoms, "That's Jung...J-U-N-G... no E", he would say.

When I left Chelsea I went a few doors south on NY Rte. 12 to Davy's Last Chance Saloon to call Noee and to my amazement he was sitting in the far booth, Rolling Rock in hand and pretending to pay attention to Oscar Williams' incessant inane babbling. I quite naturally tried to leave as fast as possible, but as I turned to slip out the door I was face to face with Wayne and Dwayne Williams!

The "*proster schmooles*" of the Chenango Valley.... the Williams Brothers...all three of them in one bar room at the same time... and in the daylight! A very frightening if not dangerous situation.

Wayne and Dwayne started in on me at once, "Hey CB, foo! Gotcha ten-fo an' fi' by fi', gud buddy. Chelsea say you quit be CBin'. You wants ta sell you CB? How much you want fo' it? Give ya three hunnert. Sheet, I give you tree hunnert and you kin do my trap line one mornin'.

Upon hearing his brothers yelling at me, Oscar thunders up to the door and yells at them, "Yo, foos! You ain't got no tree hunnert and dat trap line be mine, foos. Now git back dare an sit wid Noee, I be talkin' with CB man cheer."

I glanced toward the Noee's booth and saw him bolt out the back door where Chelsea kept her talking dog. I quickly asked Oscar if he was going to Chelsea's holiday party. Oscar paled, coughed and clutched his right arm as though he had a heart attack. Mentioning Chelsea to Oscar often brought on salivary, flatulent or upper respiratory attacks and now apparently heart problems. I side stepped Oscar and ran out the door, like a little girl, to the parking lot and joined Noee in his bucket truck where I asked him to come home with me to look at my tower. I explained to him I wanted to take

it down.

Noee set up his truck and went up about twenty-five feet and after a brief survey decided he would need a much larger machine if he were to do the job. We set up the conditions and I expected him around noon on Saturday a week away.

Sure enough Noee shows up at noon with his brother, a semi and an Admar 6036 Sky Trac on the flatbed trailer. This is a huge forklift weighing in at 6000 pounds with a heavy steel basket chained to the forks. After a couple of attempts Noee and his brother had the tower down and the top ten feet propped up on a step ladder in my back yard.

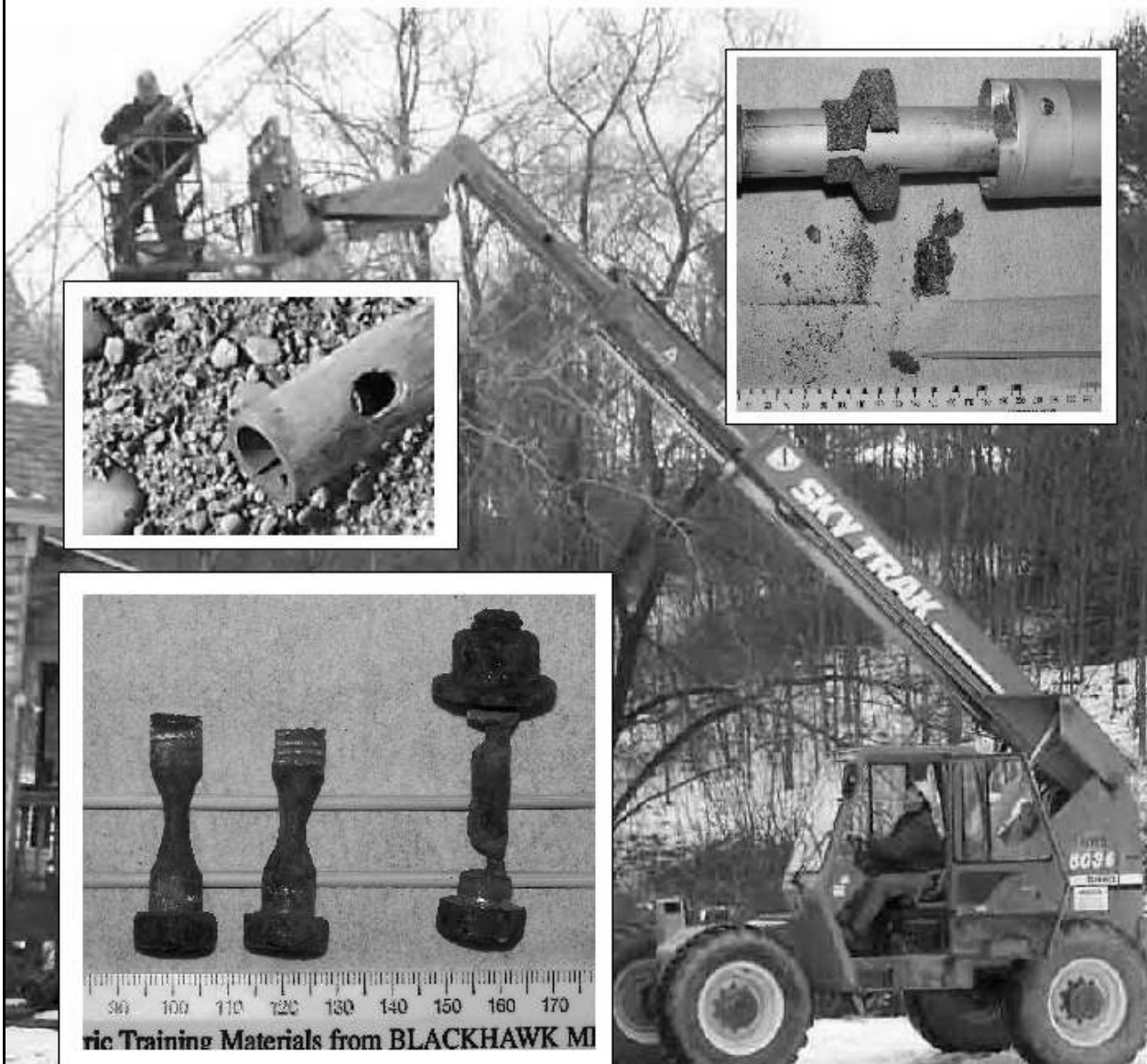
We all went in my house where we had coffee and settled up for the tower job. Noee asked if I knew others who might want their towers taken down. I said that I did not, but would recommend him if the subject came up.

After surveying the tower and antennas in my yard I decided my first mission was to separate the mast from the rotor in order to safely set aside the TH3-Mk3 and the eleven element two meter beam. Then disassemble the four sections of tower and stow them away and finally take the tri-bander apart for storage.

There are approximately twenty-four nuts and bolts holding the four tower sections together. They all were rusted to the point where they would not unscrew, but with just a few extra pounds of torque I broke each one of them. The portion of each bolt that was inside the aluminum tube legs were rusted and eroded to about two or three millimeters in diameter. My ignorance of metallurgy science is exceeded only by my good looks, but perhaps an electrolytic action between the aluminum tower legs and the steel bolts caused some of this problem. Two tower sections had elongated holes as well caused by an occasional sway in the bucolic breezes of suburban Chenango Forks. After a couple hours of work I was able to stow all four tower sections in my cellar.

Now I have a fourteen foot boom and ten foot mast with the tri-bander and two meter beam to take apart for storage. All of the nuts and bolts were rusted solid so I removed them the same way as the tower hardware: by twisting them to the breaking point. The traps on the tri-bander have a plastic cap on each end to

NOEE AND THE WAYWARD TOWER



The composite picture above shows Noee and his brother, a close up of one of the elongated holes in a tower leg, an antenna trap with insect debris including an insect pupa (the skewer points to the pupa) and a close up of the deteriorated tower leg bolts.

keep the elements out. Every one of these caps had split and a variety of critters including tiny spiders had made these traps their home over the months of down time. I would guess a little RF energy in those traps every day

for itself within its life span. Diamonds and love may be for ever, but towers have a finite life. — *by John Carrington, WB2SGS*

would have discourage those denizen of the aluminum tubing. I broke the radials down to five foot pieces, left the boom and the mast intact and stored all of the parts overhead in my garage.

Owning and using a tower is only an asset until it becomes a liability. The trick here is to know when t h a t metamorphosis takes place. One way to know is to inspect the whole thing periodically. Perhaps every fifteen years unless visible signs of wear are seen earlier. Any extra money spent on a tower to make it easier to be lowered for repairs would probably pay

Binghamton Amateur Radio Association, Inc.
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First Class

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
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, January 21st
Town of Binghamton Town Hall, 279 Park Avenue, South
of the Ross Park Entrance

Board Meeting

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

Exam Session

7:00 PM Monday, January 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**

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