

## President's Corner

### August 2010

*From the diary of KC2KLC:*

*Day 96 – Still without a radio setup. Withdrawal symptoms more frequent and increasing in severity.*

Okay, maybe it's not *that* severe, but I sure do miss not being able to get on the air, especially since I'm hearing that conditions are improving somewhat due to increased solar activity. I'm also reading about all sorts of cool VHF propagation that's happening, which I've not yet had the opportunity to explore.

I also miss shortwave monitoring. I've actually spent more of my radio time monitoring than communicating, and there's still a lot of interesting things to hear. Last week, radio station WSKG aired a segment from the NPR show *All Things Considered* about "numbers" stations (on which I gave a BARA presentation last year), which are used by spies and can still be monitored. I was away on vacation, so I missed hearing the story, but I downloaded a "podcast" (audio recording available via internet) and will get to hear it when I play it for the membership at the next BARA general meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup> (remember, this month's meeting is our annual picnic at Otsiningo Park in Binghamton on August 18<sup>th</sup>).

I mentioned being on vacation last week. To celebrate a quarter century since graduating college, my old college roommates, together with our spouses, went on a cruise to Alaska. I debated bringing some monitoring gear with me, but ultimately left it behind. At first I thought a scanner might be worthwhile, but I realized I'd spend far more time out at sea than docked, so maritime VHF monitoring (non-existent here in inland Binghamton) would be limited. I also thought there might be some interesting shipboard communications to listen in on, but was assured by an acquaintance who has done so that all you generally hear is Phillipino and Indonesian chatter between the foreign crewmembers. I then considered my old portable longwave/medium wave/shortwave radio (a Realistic DX-440, aka Sangean 803A – it was my primary monitoring rig until I purchased an Icom R8500, at which time I moved it to my basement workshop), but upon picking it up, I decided it was just a bit too hefty, and would rather not have the extra weight to deal with. The new MP3 player I had with me is also an FM receiver – too bad it didn't also receive AM, or I could have tried some medium wave DXing!

But the ceiling and walls of my study are now patched and repainted, and as soon as I paint the trim and lay down some carpet, it'll be time to set up my new station. I've been talking to a lot of people about RF grounding, because my study is on the second floor, and I've read that if my ground wire is a half-wavelength at the frequency I'm transmitting on, I could get bad reflections (high SWR). Guess I'll have to take some measurements and do a bit of math (I hate doing math – it makes my head hurt). I'll let y'all know how it works out when I get it together!

73 de allen lutins KC2KLC  
KC2KLC@LUTINS.ORG