

President's Corner

September 2010

This past month I had the pleasure of visiting the the BARA shack to operate for an afternoon. For those of you who weren't aware, BARA members enjoy use ham shack located on a scenic hilltop off Milks Road in Vestal. The shack is outfitted with a Kenwood transceiver, a tri-band beam antenna with rotor atop a tower, a dipole antenna, and a PC. The site is gorgeous – I spent part of my afternoon picking lush ripe blackberries adjacent to the shack.

I find the BARA shack site to be far superior to my home in the valley. With my “slinky” dipole, I struggle to achieve DX (I usually have to resort to CW or digital modes), but up on the hill, the same 100 watt power gives me a clear voice into Europe. I had previously received awesome signal reports from European SSB stations; that day I contacted Siena, Italy and Paraguay (South America). I also copied a couple of Slow-Scan TV signals (I'm submitting these to our editor in hopes that we will be able to reproduce them in color in the online version of the BARA Facts) using software and an audio interface I've provided. I will soon be purchasing a PC interface (USB-based) so that we can expand our digital capabilities there, and be able to send (not just receive) using SSTV and other digital modes.

Your membership dues are supporting use and maintenance of the shack, which is available for use by all BARA members. If you are interested in using the shack, contact myself or any of the Officers listed on the last page of this newsletter for information. You are free to use your own callsign, or else you can use the club call (W2OW). If you decide to use the club callsign, Mel (WE2K), our Trustee, has established the following guidelines:

- Operators must remain within the bands allocated to the class of license they hold – using the W2OW callsign does *not* grant privileges outside one's designated limits.
- BARA members can also use the W2OW callsign from home (during, for example, contests), but permission must first be secured from Mel.

Anyone under the age of 18 should be accompanied by an adult when using the BARA shack.

The next activity planned up at the shack is Jamboree on the Air, during the weekend of October 16-17 (this is also the weekend of the NY QSO Party, so the airwaves should be jumping!). As we did this past Field Day, we will again have a portable toilet onsite to facilitate long-term use of the shack. I am working with a couple of co-workers to ensure that we have a few local Boy Scouts participating this year. Weather permitting, we will camp out up on the hilltop. If you would like to be involved, please let me know!

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