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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

October 2005

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

President's Corner

My apologies to everyone. The recent rainfall is all my fault. I started some antenna work last week and there has not been a dry moment ever since. I assembled the antenna in the rain. I put it up in the rain. I need to crawl under my deck to run the feedline, but I refuse to crawl through mud — I guess the feedline will wait until next August.

If you were not at the September meeting you missed a great program. Tom Siglin, WA2LTD, gave us an informative presentation on inrush current limiters. Tom has a bunch of nifty products designed to protect our equipment.

I also announced that the club is working toward re-establishing a lease on our old operating site on Milks Road in Hawleyton. Jack Connors has been working with the Milks family to get things rolling and we hope to be BACK in THE SHACK in another month or so. Jack is the point-man for this effort — the only point man!

I capitalized BACK in THE SHACK above on purpose. While it is great that we will be back on the Milks Road site, once again we will be leasing the property. The club officers have agreed that we need to continue to search for property we can own. To that end we are going to be kicking off an effort to raise a substantial amount of money which will be eventually be used to purchase a site we can call out own, an effort called BACK THE SHACK!

What is a substantial amount? I addressed this at an earlier meeting, but I'll give you a brief overview. We looked at some property in the Town of Owego, price: \$16,000. Estimates of needed improvements were: \$7,000 for electricity, \$3,000

to improve / build a 'shack', \$4,000 for tower installation. A substantial amount indeed.

I am only using the Owego property as an example. There have been other parcels, some more, some less — but there is a common thread, whatever the cost, we don't have the \$\$ sitting in the bank. We need to fix that.

So the club is going to set out on a campaign to raise some money, our goal is \$30,000 over the next three years. You will be getting a letter with details in the next few weeks. If you have questions, ideas, a deed to 50 acres, come to the October meeting!

Speaking of campaigns, 'tis the season for election campaigns. Club officer elections are held in November just like the big guys. No hanging chads, no touch-screens, just an old fashioned paper ballot at the November General Meeting. One thing we need is a slate of candidates to put on the ballot! 2006 will be an exciting year for the club, YOU can help out. See Bob Handel, K2FU, and get on the ballot. — *Best 73, Bill, N2BC*

Shining in the Midst of Trouble

The recent hurricanes in the Southern United States have been a trial for those immediately affected and with all the rumor and misinformation floating around very little is certain except that many people have had their lives disrupted and their homes have suffered terrible destruction. But in the midst of disaster Amateur Radio has once again come through as an immediate and reliable link when the communications infrastructure fails. Ham Operators stepped in, improvised, and demonstrated once again that our "old fashioned" and "obsolete" hobby still fills a need in a world where people

increasingly connected, online, and wireless, a world where those links are complex, fragile, and subject to multiple points of failure.

Ham Radio came through — as it always has.

But it would be a small victory if our role was only noted within our ranks and we should be proud (and grateful) that our role is receiving wider press. Besides the expected coverage in *QST* and other journals other outlets have noted our activity.

In particular, we might take note of the lead editorial in *Electronic Design* for September where Dave Maliniak, AD2A, presents our case before an audience of professional Electronic Designers and Engineers. You can read the story at <<<http://www.elecdesign.com/Articles/ArticleID/11136/11136.html>>> and you might find it enlightening and inspiring.

Looking to the Future

A recent notice from the Kodak Company gives pause for reflection.

It seems that Kodak is winding down and discontinuing production of Black and White materials. To those of us who experienced the thrill of developing Verichrome Pan in trays and who watched (under Ruby Light) as Dektol coaxed an image onto the blank sheet of Velox, it seems as if a door is closing. To those of us who consider the position of the United States as a leader in technology, there is cause for concern.

The hobbies that once gave youngsters their first exposure to technology are fast disappearing. In a recent interview, Professor Moore (of Moore's Law fame) remarked that it was the "bangs and stinks" of chemistry that led him and many of his colleagues into scientific and engineering careers. There are probably many among us who could echo his sentiments, but where can one buy an old fashioned "Chemcraft" Chemistry Set these days?

What about the magazines? The *Popular Mechanics*, *Modern Electronics*, *Radio and Electronics*, and many others that tempted us with their colored covers and thrilled us with their promise of a better future and easy projects are gone. What fills their place?

More than one writer has worried about the lack of interest among our youth in following technical career paths and the fact that students in the United States are "falling behind" in technical academics. How do we close this gap?

You won't find an easy answer here, but you will find a suggestion that our Hobby — Amateur Radio — is still a viable and exciting introduction to a world of Science and Engineering. It's true that Heath and Eico are gone, but TenTec, Ramsey, and Velman are still in business and we can still listen across the world with a handful of parts and a bit of wire. We just need PR, Salesmen, and Advocates and we — if we really care about this Hobby of Ours — are just the ones to fill this role.

Give it a thought. Whether it be your own child, a grandchild, niece, nephew, neighbor kid, or other; we can make a difference by sharing our knowledge and enthusiasm and perhaps we can change a life and help to give it direction. For the braver among us, volunteer in a classroom or Scout Troop and touch a Few for the Future!

On the Hilltop

As Bill, N2BC, has noted in his "corner", BARA has the opportunity to return to the Hill once again. That's good news for us as a Club, but it should also be a catalyst for serious reflection and action on our part.

We are a Club of diverse interests and activities, but one thing that always united us and gave us a point of focus was Our Shack. It was a place to operate, to congregate, to work, and to play. Although I, myself, have never been a big Contest Operator, I did enjoy the several contests I worked there, Special Events, and Field Days. The Picnics were also fun — a time to kick back and to relax, but I must confess a special fondness for the days when we turned out as a group to break a sweat on yard work, maintenance, and general housekeeping. I have to say that I miss those days and I hope that we realize our immediate goal of regaining a place to operate.

I also believe that we should look to a larger goal: Leasing property works to a point, but leases do come to an end and very little is permanent in

this world of ours. Bill's figures seem a reasonable assessment for the start of such a project and they point to a need for serious and directed planning and fund raising.

As a member of this Club, I vote we continue and I plan to work to make an permanent home for BARA a reality. I'd like to invite all of you to join in the project. — *Your Editor, Eddie, KB2SCF*

Blast From the Past

The latest issue of *Lindsay's Technical Books* includes several "new" radio offerings that we hope to review in these pages. For those of you who are not familiar with this outfit, it is a publishing company that specializes in odd and unique technical texts. Some are new, others are reprints from the 19th and early 20th Century. Although most of the books cover Engineering (including Steam and Locomotive) and Machine Shop Practice, there are a number on Electricity and Radio.

If you were one of those kids who read *The Boy Mechanic*, *The Boy's Book of Electricity*, and *The Shortwave Handbook* to tatters you will find them in *Lindsay* and more besides!

Interested? Write to Lindsay Publications, Inc; P.O. Box 538; Bradley, IL 60915 or point your Web Browser at <<<http://www.lindsaybks.com>>>.

TANSTAAFL

In a current issue of *Worldradio*, Crusty Old Kurt reminds his readers that a very small and extremely compact antenna only covers a wide range of frequencies with a low SWR if there are lots of losses in the system.

In other words, a given antenna (absent a Transmatch) will only cover a narrow band of frequencies with low SWR unless the design of the antenna takes deliberate steps to increase the bandwidth of the antenna or unless there are sufficient areas of loss in the system to assure that un-radiated power is converted to heat instead of being reflected back to the transmitter.

To put it another way: There A'int No Such Thing as a Free Lunch! If an antenna manufacturer makes extravagant promises, there may be extreme compromises in the design.

Finding That Manual

An Electronic Resource on the Internet that deserves to be better known is the Boatanchor Manual Archive <<<http://bama.sbc.edu/>>>. If you have an old "Hollow State" (AKA Tube) rig or piece of test equipment that lacks a manual, you may find what you need at BAMA.

The materials are posted in any of several formats and can be downloaded at no cost. While no promises of high-quality reproduction are made or implied, the material is usually sufficient for most purposes and in many cases it may be the only place to find information on an odd or obsolete piece of equipment.

If you enjoy working on older equipment, give BAMA a try.

Upcoming Events

BACK TO THE SHACK will be a major item on the agenda for our October General Meeting. Please come to hear what Our Club is considering and to let us know how YOU feel about this important issue.

Our November General Meeting will include Election of Officers and Directors for 2006. Nominations are still open and should be communicated to Bob, K2FU.

In December we hold our annual Christmas/Holiday Party. It's always a lot of fun and we hope for a bigger turnout than ever. Watch the *Facts* for more details!

Reminder

It goes without saying that the editor of the *BARA Facts* is always thrilled to receive submissions.

Particular thanks are due to those who have submitted articles recently — your contributions are greatly appreciated and they add a balance and flavor that keeps the *Facts* from becoming "Ed's Soapbox & Cribs From the *ARRL Letter*". They also help keep the font set at 12-point Times New Roman!

Please keep those articles, cards, and letters coming to kb2scf@arrl.net or Ed Plesnar, KB2SCF; 305 Hoffman Avenue; Vestal, NY 13850.

Club Officers and Committees			
President	Bill Coleman	N2BC	748-5232
Vice President	Bob Handel	K2FU	693-4310
Secretary	allen lutins	KC2KLC	729-4817
Treasurer	Paul Slocum	N2NCB	687-2057
Directors	Steve Orzelek	N2MSB	775-0281
	Mel Snitchler	WE2K	723-9612
	Jack Connors	WB2GHH	724-8822
	Jim Lawson	KC2JED	797-1583
W2OW Trustee	Mel Snitchler	WE2K	723-9612
Newsletter	Ed Plesnar	KB2SCF	754-3810

Next General Meeting

7:30 PM, Wednesday, October 19th
Town of Binghamton Town Hall, 279 Park Avenue, South of the Ross Park Entrance

Board Meeting

7:00 PM, Wednesday November 2nd
Broome Community College Campus, Office of Emergency Services (West Side of Campus)

Exam Session

7:00 PM Monday, October 31st
Vestal Public Library, Route 434 Vestal

BARA Dues

\$18/year Single Member; \$27/year Family

DX Cluster

W2OW on 145.070 MHz with a Data Rate of 1,200 baud; questions to n2bc@stny.rr.com

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

e-Mail Address: w2ow@arrl.net