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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

September 2005

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

President's Corner

It has been 4 years since I retired. I'm still trying to figure out how I got anything done at home when I had a full-time job. Even with more available time, the list of "honey-do" projects keeps growing.

I must admit, however, that I spend much more time in front of the radios lately. The past couple weeks have certainly been exciting. I hope you have had an opportunity to listen to the hurricane related nets. In the face of incredible destruction, hundreds — even thousands — of hams across the county jumped in to help. The SATERN net on 14.265 MHz has been running almost continuously since before Katrina made landfall. The Hurricane Watch Net on 14.325 MHz got a couple weeks rest after Katrina and is now gearing up Ophelia. I cannot imagine the amount of local activity across the Gulf region on VHF and UHF frequencies.

If you are not familiar with these ham organizations, do an Internet search on *satern* and *hurricane watch net*. Read up on their activities, listen in, help out.

Local news: We have some exciting news to present to the club at the September general meeting. I can't go into it now because we are still dotting Is and crossing Ts, but we are close to a deal on a club site. There is still a lot of work left to do and I plan to map this out at the club meeting.

Speaking of food, you didn't hear it, but my stomach just grumbled. We had a great turnout at the Ross Park Zoo for our annual August Picnic. Where were you? Thanks go out to Mel Snitchler, WE2K, for wrestling the cooking tools away from me. Thanks also to Bob Handel, K2FU, (just call him "pyro" from now on — it took a couple gallons

of lighter fluid, but Bob got two charcoal grills going). Thanks to Jack Connors, WB2GHH, for making the arrangements with the Ross Park folks. Hedy Clothier, AA2MU, did a great job with the shopping (must be a girl thing). A big THANKS to everyone that brought food from home. We had an incredible assortment of goodies.

In addition to an update on our shack site at the September 21st meeting, we will have a presentation from Tom Siglin, WA2LTD. Tom is an interesting fellow. He's a broadcast engineer (read that as BIG transmitters); a professional computer graphics geek; and he has a side business making electronic gizmos that protect our computers, stereos, and ham gear. Tom will talk about the gizmos and how they work.

I hope you can make it to the September meeting, lots of exciting news, coffee, donuts, and fellow hams. See you there! — *73 DE Bill, N2BC*

BARA Member Katrina Deployed

Tom Vroman, KC2OFK, a BARA member, has been deployed to the KATRINA recovery effort as part of his assignment at the Broome County Office of Emergency Services. Tom, as you may recall, shared his experiences of his IVAN deployment at a BARA meeting earlier this year. In an e-mail to Jack, WB2GHH, Tom notes:

...Have been working here at the Montgomery, Al Red Cross Headquarters for the past two weeks. We put out the request to the ARRL for Hams to deploy here and head South about a week ago, as we are covering three states from this headquarters. The Hams have been great, providing communication via HF to over sixty shelters in our jurisdiction. The ham desk is directly adjacent to the ARC comm unit here in the old Kmart, which is the same place we were last year for

Ivan.... I'll be back this Saturday... See ya, Tom Vroman
As I watch the various news events of the Gulf Region I find myself wondering what we would do if a disaster struck in this area. Let's not get carried away with a big disaster but think of a more common one: a power outage that lasted for a week. Think back of a few years ago to the ice storm in northern New York State. What would you do?

How many of us know where the flashlights are and when was the last time the batteries were checked? Can we even remember when we replaced them last? With no electric we won't have a furnace, lights, computer, large TV, microwave, and (for us hams anyway) the radio gear. Even a CW rig won't work if there is no power. If it is a major power outage, the public water system will be down along with the sewer system. There will be traffic problems and many other issues — more that you can even think of.

Now let's turn to the communications aspect of the disaster. We as hams pride ourselves on how we can provide communications in an emergency, but we assume that we have power and that we are not in the affected area. We may have our HT with two battery packs, but what happens when those packs need recharging? Where did I put that case that will take AA alkaline cells? Our base stations are probably totally dependent on commercial power so no communications there. The mobile rig has had hay wired power and antenna connections. The mobile antenna has needed new coax for years, but we haven't done anything yet and an emergency is not the time to buy new coax. Now for the rigs themselves: Do you know how to change frequencies and memorize those frequencies, or do you just use the VFO and lose them when you least expect it? And now for the big one: the Dreaded PL. Could you put your rig on a PL frequency and memorize it? Many repeaters have the ability to be put into tone squelch mode if interference or other things make it necessary.

Do you know where the instruction books for your radios are hidden? Do you have a cheat sheet for those little tricks to get the radio programmed? Yes, you can clone some of the new radios and use a computer to program them, but when the power is off, you have to revert to the

Are You ready?

old way. Suppose the antenna on the roof of the house fails? What do you use? The repeaters could very well be down after a period of time, do you know how to use simplex, and what simplex frequencies are usual? Around here it is 147.540MHz for Emergency operations with others announced as the situation warrants. Speaking of TV, even a battery or generator will not help if the cable is out. For that matter, that new digital phone and 911 capability will be gone also. For TV, do you have pair of "Rabbit Ears" (and maybe a balun to match them to your Cable-Ready TV? WBNG Channel 12 is the Emergency Broadcast TV outlet for this area, so dig out the rabbit ears and keep them handy. How many of you have a Weather Radio and pay attention to the alarms that are sent out?

These are just questions for each of you to think about. There will be things that we can't plan for regardless of how hard we try. The situation above is a real happening that occurs someplace after every major thunderstorm and in some cases snow storms. It is not something that won't happen here, it is here in the Triple Cities (greater Binghamton). From time to time there have been training sessions and practice drills, Do you participate? Think about it and prepare and hopefully we will never experience what the people down south are going through. — *73s Ford Drake, AB2HS*

Amateur Radio Students Hold Parley Here

**More Than 100 Gather to Discuss Latest Inventions
Banquet at Legion's Clubhouse Climaxes First
Convention**

More than 100 amateur radio from New York state, Pennsylvania and New Jersey attended the first annual convention of the Binghamton Amateur Radio association held Sunday afternoon at the American Legion clubhouse.

Latest inventions and developments in radio and electrical research were demonstrated. Old time spark transmitters, antique tubes of the type first used in radio broadcasts and reception, and the most modern transmitters and tubes were on display.

Welcoming the amateurs to Binghamton, Mayor Miles M. Smith congratulated them for their interest in their "hobby." In his address he recalled the first convention of radio enthusiasts held in New England 20

years ago attended by 23 interested amateurs. Edwin R. Weeks acted as toastmaster at the dinner which closed the session. He introduced Herbert W. Squires, chief operator of WPGL, Binghamton police radio station.

Dr. C. G. Lyon, 98 Prospect street, an ardent

The technical speaker was Douglas A Smith of the electronics division of the Hygrade Sylvania corporation. He discussed modern types of tubes and the evolution of tube inventions.

D. G. Goetechus, president of the club, presided at the dinner, introducing Mayor Smith and Mr. Weeks. Mr Goetcheus awarded prizes, donated by merchants, to winners of amateur contests held as a feature of the convention.

On the entertainment program, Clyde R. Powell of Endicott Johnson Corporation was presented as an amateur magician. W. Raymond Burrows of Deposit played selections on the "Theramin", a musical instrument operated by induction coils and radio tubes. Arthur English and his New Yorkers also entertained with music.

The committee in charge comprised Mr. Goetcheus, Donald Purdy, Earl Chubbuck, Bert Benedict, Ross Baxter, Arthur Smith, Nick Peros, Kenneth Kenyon, Leroy Davies, Jack McNulty, William O'Neil, Dr. G. C. Lyon, Spencer, Joseph Sarley, Howard Swick and Rueben Turrell. — *Retyped from a newspaper clipping hand dated September 10, 1934 by Jack Connors, WB2GHH*

PL Tone on 82

Operators on the Two-Meter Band are advised that the SVARA Repeater operating on 146.82 MHz is now listening for a PL/CTSS Tone of 146.2. Ford Drake, AB2HS, informs us that the tone was added to alleviate interference issues on the repeater input. The Repeater also transmits the same tone on output so radios equipped with PL/CTSS Decode can be set to listen in silence on 146.82 until the squelch is broken with the appropriate tone.

Hints & Helps

Apropos Ford's valuable comments earlier in this issue it would not be out of place to note that Cable TV Coax may be pressed into service as antenna feedline. At moderate power levels TV Coax should serve in a pinch and it might not be a bad idea to add a couple of F-Female-to-PL259 adapters to your emergency kit.

Likewise, an emergency antenna for Two-Meter work can be fabricated from several lengths of wire

amateur radio enthusiast, told of receiving amateur broadcasts of details of the burning of the Morro Castle. A New Jersey amateur, according to Dr. Lyons, broadcast a vivid description of the landing of a group of survivors on the New Jersey coast.

about nineteen inches long. Configure a Radiator and Ground Plane and lash the thing together with Electrical or Duct Tape. SWR should be your least concern if you have to choose between emergency operations and not getting out at all!

As Ford notes, power is an important consideration. Do you have pigtails, clips, and connectors to lash-up a connection to a 12V DC source? Consider too that some of the recent handhelds can be charged from a DC Adapter, but they will NOT take power from the charger socket! For such radios a pair of alligator clip-leads may be an emergency alternative.

Food, water, and medication are non-electronic necessities if you ever have to "bug out" for a shelter or an assigned operating location. If you are sent to help, you don't want to become another problem so prepare in advance.

And speaking of shelters and service: The desire to help isn't sufficient in an event where there may be issues of security and authorization. Make sure that you have identification and relevant documentation and if you can register for emergency service (i.e. RACES, ARES, etc.) in advance you will be "on the list" and (one would hope) cleared in advance.

Prepare now for eventualities that we hope will never come to pass. Time in preparation is never wasted if and when and in the event that an emergency breaks!

Deadline Set for FCC Morse Proposal

The deadline to submit comments on the FCC Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order (NPRM&O) in WT Docket 05-235 (released 19 July) has been set for 31 October. Reply comments are due by 14 November. The NPRM&O, which proposes to do away with the 5 WPM Morse code requirement for all license classes, turned away several other petition requests, including proposals to create a new entry-level license class. — From the ARRL Letter for 2 September

Heads Up — Elections

It's not too early to begin thinking of a slate of Officers and Directors to guide BARA through 2006. Bob Handel, K2FU, will head up the Nominating Committee and he would certainly be glad to hear from any member willing to toss his or her hat into the ring.

Balloting will be conducted at our General Meeting in November.

Our Officers and Directors set the course for the Club. Their service is much appreciated and we are grateful to any member willing to step up to the task and to join in. Our Club is the sum of our Members and we invite your serious consideration of service as an Officer or on the Board.

BARA Facts Deadline

The deadline for submissions to the BARA Facts is generally the Friday after the Board Meeting. Your editor tries to put the issue to "bed" over the weekend.

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

BARA, The Binghamton Amateur Radio Association



is an ARRL Affiliated Club

e-Mail Address: w2ow@arrl.net

Next General Meeting

7:30 PM, Wednesday, September 21st

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

Board Meeting

7:00 PM, Wednesday October 5th

Broome Community College Campus, Office of Emergency Services (West Side of Campus)

Exam Session

7:00 PM Monday, September 26th

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