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BARA

Facts

*Newsletter of the
Binghamton Amateur Radio Association*

February 2005

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

President's Corner de N2BC

Quite a few brave souls fought the weather and made it to the January meeting – THANKS!

Tom Vroman, Senior Fire Investigator for Broome County gave us a great presentation on his experiences with the Red Cross in Florida after the hurricanes. Tom gave us a “tour” of the emergency facilities and equipment that the Red Cross has available as they set up command centers at disaster sites.

Paul Slocum, N2NCB, announced that our not-for-profit application has been approved by both New York State and the Federal Government. Thanks to Mel Snitchler, WE2K, and Paul for pushing this through. Mel's son, Todd, a lawyer in Akron, Ohio, handled the majority of the Federal applications. Todd donated many hours of his time on this task and we owe him a huge THANK YOU!

The focus of the February meeting will be REPEATERS. Specifically, Brian Adee, K2DLB, will take us through some of the major changes that have been made to the SVARA repeater system. Then Brian will lead a discussion and idea session to determine the future of the BARA repeater, W2OW 147.390. Brian will collect club member input and present his recommendations at a future Board of Directors meeting. I will post a notice of the “repeater” meeting via the BARA Email reflector on YAHOO once the date and time for the meeting have been determined. If you are not a member of the reflector, why not join now at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/w2ow>

If you have ideas for the W2OW repeater and cannot attend the February 16th meeting, feel free to E-mail me (n2bc@arrl.net) or drop me a postcard (513 Ridge Road, Vestal, 13850). I would prefer your input in writing rather than by phone. You can also reach Brian via Email at k2dlb@stny.rr.com — 73, Bill, N2BC

Mid-Atlantic QSO Party

Paul, N2NCB, calls the following item to our attention. It may be a bit early, but this might be a good time to start planning...

The Mid-Atlantic QSO Party is a new event to give amateur radio operators across the country and around the world the opportunity to enjoy the fun of a regional QSO Party. The First MAQSO Party will run from 1600-2400 UTC 14 May 2005 and from 1100-2400 UTC on 15 May 2005, on all HF bands except WARC bands and on VHF/UHF through 450 MHz. For the purposes of this event the Mid Atlantic region consists of the states of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The Mid-Atlantic QSO Party will provide operators the chance to pursue a competitive challenge while maintaining a low-key, low-pressure atmosphere. Or, for others, a challenge to meet or exceed their personal goals within a competitive environment. In short, the purpose of this event is for each amateur radio operator to have fun, enjoy the event, and seek whatever level of participation they desire.

The MAQSO Party committee will offer a multitude of certificates and awards, including: Top scorer in each Mid-Atlantic state, Top scorer in the entire Mid-Atlantic region, Top scorer in each other state, Top scorer in each DX country from which an entry is received, and more. Fixed, mobile, and rover stations are all welcome, as are QRP, and multiple operator stations.

All amateur radio operators are invited to check the MAQSO Party website at <http://www.qsl.net/maqso> for full details and contest rules, including state and county maps, and the list of the standardized 5-letter county abbreviations, all available for downloading. There are a lot of county multipliers in seven Mid-Atlantic states.

Contest logging software designers have already worked to prepare MAQSO modules for distribution to their customers, and information about these programs are published on the website when available.

For additional; information, please visit the website for full information. New York amateurs can contact Ted Edwards, W3TB, W3TB@twcny.rr.com for more information.

Amateur Radio Shines (part 1)

Steve, K2CDJ, kindly provided a summary of some Amateur Radio activities with respect to the Tsunami. We run it in several parts, beginning this month with a brief summary of the Amateur Radio situation with respect the Laccadives Island Chain.

The Tsunami that hit around 8pm on 25 December 2004, our time, spread mass destruction through a wide area bringing our attention to countries normally not in our news. Those of us active in chasing DX were focused on a very rare DX expedition to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands for 3 weeks leading up to the tsunami.

In the specialized world of chasing DX, there are 335 DXCC entities such as United States, China, Hawaii, Alaska, India, Cayman Islands, etc.. For the last few years, two of these DXCC entities ranked in the top 5 on the "Most Needed List". Lakshadweep (also known as Laccadives) (VU7) is an island chain of about 50,000 located about 250 miles west of the southwestern coast of India. Andaman & Nicobar Islands (VU4) with about 370,000 people is an island chain of 572 islands running approximately north and south 500 miles along the 93rd longitude about 300 miles west of the tourist area of Phuket, Thailand.

India administers both VU7 and VU4 under separate agencies. Amateur radio in mainland India is very viable for citizens of India. Foreign nationals have been — from time to time — at the pleasure of the licensing authorities, able to obtain a very restricted license to operate at a specified mainland location. Charles Harpole, K4VUD, by his extensive operations in other countries neighboring India was one of the fortunate ones, acquiring a phone-only license for operation in New Delhi, for example. India has never issued a license to a foreign national to operate in VU4 or VU7. In fact, amateur radio operations even by India citizens in VU4 and VU7 have been extremely rare.

VU7 has had 3 known authorized limited operations: 1983, 1989 & 1987. The last known authorized operation at VU4 was in 1987.

It is no surprise that the DX world was "more than a bit excited" when VU2RBI announced an operation on VU4 from December 3 to December 31, 2004 with 5 operators operating with calls of VU4RBI and VU4RNO. The path to VU4 from our area is extremely difficult: approximately 8,700 miles beamed about 13 degrees — which meant the very tough polar path. Nearing the bottom of the sunspot cycle meant, that at the very best a "window" of around an hour if geomagnetic disturbances were very low.

VU2RBI - Bharathi Prasad worked diligently for many years to obtain this special permission. She is one of India's most influential hams and has previously operated from VU4.

The question quickly arises as to why is it so difficult to obtain permission to operate from VU7 and VU4. Both need special restricted visitor's permits. Permits are granted for certain areas for specialized activities with many restrictions. For example, visitors to the Nicobars which is part of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and are located south of 10 degrees latitude must be on a special government authorized research project. Tourists are not allowed.

VU7 islands have slowly been building a tourist industry but many restrictions still apply. VU4 — Andaman & Nicobar Islands has long had a viable tourist industry. Under British rule, Port Blair on South Andaman was a penal colony: a very checkered past. Though the island chain numbers in the hundreds, only 26 are inhabited. Of special interest and protection are five very primitive but distinct tribes - mostly located on the Nicobars. One of these tribes (the ONGES) before the tsunami numbered about 100 and has not allowed contact with outsiders in decades. They are a true Stone Age tribe. This is the tribe that may have shot poisoned arrows at a government helicopter after the tsunami.

Field Days In February???

All BARA Members are reminded that Field Days are a scant five months away. That may seem like a long time, but it really isn't if we want to mount an all-out Club Effort and put BARA back on the Contesting Map!

Yes, friends, the BARA Field Day presence over the last few years has been as close to nothing as you can get. We could suggest a number of reasons for this, but water under the bridge is gone forever and it is more useful by far to ask *what we want to do this year*. So, a challenge to all members: *Do you want to put BARA on*

the air this year? Do you want to make some RF and heat up the Ether? If you do, then why not step up to it at the next General Meeting and offer to lead the charge?

I'm not kidding here. Field Day is a lot of fun, but it won't happen unless The Club (aka *you*) want it to happen and work to make it happen. If there isn't any interest, so be it, but if one or two or three of you would like to put W2OW on the air this is the time to stand up and get the ball rolling! — *Eddie, your Editor*

Some New Wrinkles in 2005 Field Day Rules

Those planning to participate in this year's Field Day will need to bone up in advance on a few changes in the rules for the ever-popular operating event. Field Day this year takes place June 25-26. In 2004, there were 2,261 Field Day entries — the most ever.

Field Day is similar in format to a contest, but it is primarily a means to exercise and demonstrate Amateur Radio's emergency operating capabilities. It's also a great chance to have fun while demonstrating Amateur Radio. ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, says that among other things rule changes for 2005 expand eligibility for bonus points.

"All groups will be eligible for some kind of bonus points," Henderson said. "Make sure you carefully read Field Day Rule 7.3." That rule spells out how to qualify for such bonus points as 100 percent emergency power, media publicity, message handling, making satellite contacts, using an alternative power source and copying the W1AW bulletin, among other things. Many bonus point categories are available to all entry classes. Henderson notes that some large clubs compete among themselves to see who can claim the highest number of transmitters. Under the revised rules, all transmitters must be on the air with an operator to count toward a club's entry class. "You have to actually have individual people and sufficient equipment capable of operating simultaneously," Henderson emphasized, referencing Rule 4. "The key word there is *simultaneously*."

The Field Day exchange consists of the number of transmitters on the air followed by the participation category (A through F). Operators would send "3A," for example, for a club or non-club portable setup with three transmitters on the air at the same time. Rule 4 also specifically prohibits switching and simulcasting devices.

The 2005 Field Day rules also modify the number of transmitters eligible for bonus points that a

group can claim for its operating class. "You can only claim the emergency power bonus points for up to 20 transmitters," Henderson explains. "That's a maximum of 2,000 emergency power bonus points." Although there no limit on the number of transmitters eligible participants may have on the air, Field Day rules already generally prohibit the use of more than one transmitter at the same time on a single band-mode.

In addition, Field Day 2005 will introduce a new "Youth Element" bonus category (Rule 7.3.15). Clubs or groups operating in Class A, C, D, E or F now can claim 20 bonus points — up to a maximum of 100 — for each person aged 18 or younger, who completes a valid Field Day contact. Single-operator Class B stations can earn a 20-point bonus if the operator is age 18 or younger. Two-person Class B setups can claim a 20-point bonus for each operator age 18 or younger, for a maximum of 40 points. The maximum number of participants for Class B entries remains at two.

Another rule change clarifies that Get On The Air (GOTA) stations — instituted a few years ago to encourage new or comparatively inexperienced operators to gain operating practice — use the same exchange as the "parent" station. The maximum transmitter output power for GOTA stations is 150 W, and GOTA stations may only operate on the Field Day HF bands. Free transmitters do not count toward a group's total, and GOTA stations and free VHF stations for Class A entries do not qualify for bonus point credits.

Henderson encourages Field Day participants to submit their Field Day summaries electronically (and earn bonus points) using the Web applet form <http://www.b4h.net/cabforms>. "You may input your summary information at that site for a 50-point bonus," Henderson points out.

The Maritime Radio Historical Society's K6KPH, comprised of former operators of the KPH commercial shore station, now an historic site, again will augment W1AW Field Day CW and RTTY bulletin transmissions for West Coast participants.

The complete 2005 Field Day packet is available in electronic form from the ARRL Web site at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms/05-fd-packet.pdf>

— *Extracted from the material in the ARRL Letter for 4 February 2005 (a most useful source of information on Amateur Radio matters).*

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	Frank Scoblick	N2HR	729-4249
Newsletter	Ed Plesnar	KB2SCF	754-3810



BARA, The Binghamton Amateur Radio Association is an ARRL Affiliated Club

*Binghamton Amateur Radio Association, Inc.
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Next General Meeting

7:30 PM, Wednesday, February 16th Town of Binghamton
Town Hall, 279 Park Avenue, South of the Ross Park
Entrance

Board Meeting

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

Exam Session

7:00 PM Monday, February 28th
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

W2OW Repeater

147.390 MHz, 100 Hz CTSS. BRAT Net every Sunday
Evening at 8:00 PM Local Time

First Class

