



BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

July 2006

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

A Word

There is a lot of information on the recent Flooding, the opening of the BARA Shack, and other matters in this issue of the *BARA Facts*. Your Editor thanks N2BC for ushering this raw material through the press as a Family Trip interfered with our usual press operations.

The Flood of 2006

The Broome County area was subjected to the worst flooding EVER as a result of the heavy rainfall during the last week in June. It was horrific seeing the flood waters lapping over the flood wall just east of the Tompkins Street bridge on Court Street. It was the first time that water was higher than the decking on the Washington St. bridge. Those scenes brought back vivid memories of a very similar view when the flood walls were topped at Wilkes-Barre, Pa. during hurricane Agnes in 1972. That also was a late June incident.

I recall seeing water in the Lourdes Hospital parking lot a few times over the years. In April of 2005 dirt was trucked in and a berm was constructed around the Lourdes cooling plant and rear parking areas. After the river receded, the earthen berm was pushed aside and sculptured as a divider between parking lots ready for use in the future. I don't believe anyone thought the future use would be in fourteen months. The berm was rebuilt. A number of high volume pumps with a capacity of 25,000 gallons per minute were employed but could not keep up with the seepage. The first floor started taking on water and the order was given to evacuate the hospital. Ambulances from near and far were marshaled to execute the evacuation. Ambulances from WAVES, Baldwinsville and Marcellus were lined up in the parking lot of the Broome County Public Safety Facility building at the rear of BCC.

SKYWARN nets were activated by Ford, AB2HS DEC SKYWARN ARES and Brian K2DLB EC

ARES as a result of issuance of flood watches and later flood warnings by the National Weather Service Forecast Office at E.A. Link Field. Ford and Brain spent many, many hours at NWS as WX2BGM gathering information for the weather service. Likewise, I as Broome County RACES Radio Officer reported to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Amateur Radio Room and fired up RACES operations on 146.865 using the call WB2MIS (Most Important Station). The NYS RACES frequency of 3993.5 LSB was monitored as well with periodic checks on other net frequencies.

One significant comparison that I can make relative to the Agnes and the Flood of 2006 is the amount of amateur radio communication assistance requested and or actually utilized during (at least the initial period) of Flood 2006. SKYWARN inputs were requested automatically (by the issuance of WARNINGS) and by specific requests to particular geographic areas. I understand that even though meaningful inputs were received, the total amateur radio community response, considering the numbers of amateur operators trained in SKYWARN protocol of self activation, was less than anticipated. "No one called me" isn't an acceptable answer.

During AGNES there was frantic use of amateur radio resources. BARA, at the request of a utility, set up communications in their operations center and at the Milk's Road hilltop location and relayed emergency communications to other utility locations (in other counties) 'manned by BARA and/or utility members. Other health and welfare traffic was handled into and out of the area to and from Elmira and Wilkes-Barre. There were no such H&W requests this time.

The 34 years since AGNES has seen commercial and governmental communication systems mature and become more reliable. Amateur radio has also made significant strides in developing assets to assure more

consistent coverage. Locally, SVARA has made VHF system modifications that ensure full Broome County and beyond coverage. SVARA's efforts have also resulted in the National Weather Service at Link field now being able to contact any of the 24 counties in their forecast area of responsibility. HF capabilities have also been improved.

RACES communications (communications usually between governmental entities) were slim. Having direct contact with the Oneonta EOC (146.850) did, in a most timely manner, eliminate concerns for the reported release of water from the East Sidney dam. Likewise, the response to my specific inquiries by stations monitoring the prime Broome County frequency were reassuring.

I would like to thank the following stations for not only making their presence known on 146.865 but for also supplying valued information requested that at times necessitated their travel to specific observation points: AB2HS, K2CM, K2DLB, K2DLT, K2OZF, KA2HNG, KB2JZG, KB2SCF, KC2ELV, KC2JPH, KC2KUY, KC2NUG, KC2OSM, KC8WLG, KD5YOV, KF1L, N0OFB, N0OFJ, N2KGC, N2KIW, N2LZM, N2MTH, N2VJO, N3EFW, W2AAQ, W2DLO, W2GTW, W2IFA, W2YFB, WA2FTB, WA2JID, WA2JOB, WA2PHM, WB2ALY, WB2GHH, WB8RAE, WX2BGM — *DE Jack, WB2GHH*

Learning and Preparing

We would like to thank the Hams of the area who helped supply information about rainfall amounts, road closures and flooding information. The Weather Service people used the information for the forecasts and — most importantly — the rainfall amounts from the watershed area helped the Hydrologist(s) to forecast flood crest levels and times. We have just experienced the worst flood since 1936. The potential was there for this to happen and it could happen again.

There are a few points that concern us. Every April we hold Skywarn training sessions to relay to the Hams what information is needed and talk is made of how important rainfall reports are. It is unfortunate to say, but the hams of Broome County did not participate much with rainfall reports. A simple rain gauge is available from K-mart for approximately \$ 1.99. There are fancier ones available for less than \$10.00. Placing these in your yard and reporting the amounts would be very helpful to the National Weather Service. Also any flooding of roads and road closures would be greatly

appreciated.

We have members of BARA that live east, north and south of the area that could have supplied rainfall amounts. Granted a report in Vestal doesn't necessarily help the Vestal people but it does supply valuable input for forecasting river levels downstream. We are fortunate that our Ham friends in the watershed areas in other counties did supply rainfall amounts and those were very useful. In Broome County the hams could have supplied reports to the SKYWARN net so that the Weather Service could determine what the levels would be. I know we can't stop the storms or the floods, but I think we need to look at what we as Hams can do. We like to see our deeds in print in *QST* and in other places, but if we sit and just listen, we won't have anything to print. We need to have people get involved in the hobby, and participate in activities. Some may say that they are too busy with family obligations, and we understand this. We need more participation in the drills and activities and we need a group beyond the "regular dozen" We have to make a commitment to SKYWARN and to preparation. We remind all Hams that their help is needed, especially for SKYWARN. Thanks to the Hams that did help. We look forward to more reports in the future. No reports of significance will be ignored. Please jump in and support the SKYWARN Nets and other activities that pertain Amateur Radio — *Brian Adee, K2DLB, (ARES EC) & Ford Drake, AB2HS, (DEC Skywarn Binghamton Weather Office)*

W2OW Shack Officially Opens

The approach of Field Day 2006 provided the incentive while *El Presidente*, N2BC, provided the leadership and political persuasion resulting in BARA, Inc. members and non-members applying sweat equity for weeks prior to and on the big day. The "Just In Time" principle was expertly practiced. No need to have the interfering trees trimmed and a tower and beam raised sooner than an hour before the magical 2 PM start time on Saturday June 24. Feedline and rotor control cables were laid in moments before the start time. The biggest surprise was that the antenna loaded and the rotor turned. Hurrah!

What was done? Who made this all happen? A lot of different hands supplied the ingredients to the successful recipe. A few hands worked numerous tasks over many hours. A sample of the actions required and taken...

Who was the point person on re-acquiring the

site? WB2GHH ★ Who resurrected the stored towers and “stuff”? WE2K, N2BC, N2MSB, KC2DSS, N2NCB, WB2GHH, WB2SGS ★ Who transported the stuff to the hilltop? N2MSB ★ Who identified the “new” operating positions for acquisition? KC2OFK ★ Who transported the operating positions from the EOC to the hilltop? K2DLB, AB2HS, NORM, WB8RAE, and many others ★ Who acquired details as to how and then reassembled the operating positions? Norm ★ Who scrubbed the shack floor? Norm ★ Who manhandled and transported the debris off site? WE2K, KC2EOV, and a host of assistants ★ Who acquired the services of a licensed electrician? N2BC ★ Who inspected the electrical service? K2DLB ★ Who electrically checked the coax cables? Norm ★ Who repaired the entrance road? ★ Who spearheaded the field day operation and acquired operating rules for the event? N2MSB ★ Who cut the grass? N2MSB ★ Who repaired the tower sections? N2MSB ★ Who cut back the tree line? N2BC, W2SBS, N2MSB ★ Who placed the traneivers on the operatings positions? N2BC ★ Who horsed the “small amplifier” to the hill top? N2BC, N2MSB ★ Who raised the tower and beam on 6/24? N2MSB, WE2K, K2EOV, WB8RAE, W2BSB, and an army of helpers ★ Who rigged the guys lines? WE2K ★ Who raised the HF dipole? WB8RAE, WE2K, KB2SCF, K2FU ★ Who provided inspiration and sustenance to the crew? K2ABX, WA2LTD, KC2GIL, KC2HKB, ★ Who operated field days? WB2GHH, K2FU, N4VC ★ Who visited the site during Field Days? WA2LTD, KB2SCF...

As you can see there were a lot of WHOs. Many WHOs took more than a few minutes and unusual resources to complete. Many took hours. Many WHOs were completed by the same pairs of hands. I apologize for omissions and ask that you provide me with corrections

Knowing that many have obligations and complications which limited participation it was most gratifying to see the diversity of the membership and friends of BARA, Inc. that did participate and brought this project to a most successful conclusion.

Now W2OW is OPEN for business. Don't feel slighted if you didn't yet catch a WHO or two. There are many more WHOs lurking just waiting to get grabbed. Get to the hill top and make some sparks — legal ones that is. If you can grab a WHO or two it would be appreciated. If not fire up a rig and make some contacts. — *CU on the hilltop, WB2GHH*

SK — Bill Michalak, W2FHH

Sorry to report that Bill Michalak, W2FHH, became a silent key on June 17, 2006. Bill had been ill for awhile. Bill was a member of BARA, Inc many, many years ago.

Bill was instrumental in my becoming a HAM. Back in the very early 60's, we all worked at General Electric in Johnson City. With the help of W2SGP (Mert Lucas) and WA2WTS (Ernie Bryant), Bill kept up a constant barrage of remarks as he and his cohorts nudged me toward signing up for a BARA Morse code class. I'm glad they persisted and that they were successful in their efforts.

Bill retired many years ago from GE and I'm sorry to say I lost track of him. Over the years, as I traveled the kamikaze curve area, I wondered which residence was his on adjacent Prospect Street. The similarity of his call sign (W2FHH) and mine (WB2GHH) may have been the reason he kept popping up in my thoughts. Regardless, he and his many exploits in the hobby over so many years are now memories. I'm so glad that I captured a few of them for myself. — *Jack, WB2GHH*

SK — Frank, WB2IJZ

Sorry to report that Frank WB2IJZ became a silent key on June 19, 2006. Frank will always be remembered for his unique pronunciation of his call sign as **W B 2 I eeee J Z**. — *Jack, WB2GHH*

BARA Picnic

Remember that the BARA Picnic will be upon us soon. Watch this space for more information and start packing your goodies — electronic and dietary — for our 2006 August Picnic!

Binghamton Amateur Radio Association, Inc.
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Club Officers and Committees			
President	Bill Coleman	N2BC	748-5232
Vice President	Bob Handel	K2FU	693-4310
Secretary	Bob McCabe	KC2DSS	748-9808
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, July 19th
Town of Binghamton Town Hall, 279 Park Avenue, South of the Ross Park Entrance

Board Meeting

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

Exam Session

7:00 PM Monday, July 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