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BARA Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

April 2003

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

BARA Hamfest

Mark your calendars for Saturday the 3rd of May because that is the date for the 2003 BARA Hamfest at Marvin Park in Owego (on Route 17C across from Topps Market).

This is our club's big event every year and although much of the planning has become pretty automatic (thanks to the work of Paul, N2NCB, in writing down all of the "Rules & Regulations" from past years). Our Chairman — Brian, K2DLB — has things under control and we are ready to roll, but we still need help from you, our members, when it comes to pulling off the event.

Friday, May 2nd is the first big day. We start setup around Noon by sweeping the 4-H Building, setting up tables, and general muscle work. Many hands make work light and if you can show up with a broom and work gloves your help will be more than welcome. It is really a fun afternoon that usually wraps up by 3:00 PM (depending on the turnout).

Saturday Morning (May 3rd) we need help with the Ticket Sales, Parking, and Odd Jobs. Since we want to give everyone who works a chance to enjoy the Hamfest we try to keep the shifts to a reasonable length and to do this we a list of volunteers helps a lot. If you could put your name down for an hour or so, please come to the April General Meeting and sign up for the fun so that Brian can work out a schedule.

As the Hamfest winds down (between Noon and 2:00 PM on Saturday May 3rd) we need help breaking down the event. Besides packing the tables and sweeping the building we need to police the Hamfest Area and leave things neat and in good shape. This is important because the groups that own and run the Fairgrounds know that we are a responsible group and our goodwill with them makes it easy to get the facility each year.

The day before the event, a crew from WGY

Teardown usually only takes a couple of hours and you get scavenge rights on whatever goes in the dumpster.

Think about turning out to help out. It is a lot of fun and the banter, joking, and joshing make the time fly and the work fun. And don't forget to remind your friends about the Hamfest and to talk it up on the air. Owego is the opening shot of the Hamfest Season and a great place to spend the day!

Mount Marcy

First Commercial Radio Broadcast

A few months back we had an article about BARA's once-upon-a-time intention of operating Field Day from the lodge at the end of the road at the top of Mount Marcy.

Those of you who know Mt. Marcy also know that there is no road and any attempt to get the necessary "stuff" to the top would be a very significant task. My son John, N2KIW, read the article and remembered that he had come across a book, some time back, which mentioned the first commercial broadcast from the top of Mount Marcy.

It took him awhile but he was able to relocate the book and provide me some details. The book, Mount Marcy: The Highest Peak of New York is by Sandra Weber and speaks to many aspects and history of Mount Marcy, the persons who hiked it and the organizations that protect it.

August 5, 1937 marked the hundred year anniversary of the first ascent to the summit by white men (a party of twelve in 1837). To mark the event a contingent of more than two hundred persons made their way to the summit and WGY, a General Electric Company radio station, made plans to broadcast the ceremonies from the top of Mount Marcy.

started to haul the necessary "stuff" to the top.

Details are sketchy, but the book the remarks on the five hundred pounds of equipment that required transport. Initially a log sled pulled by two horses was used, but it had only traversed about a mile of the trail when the ropes broke. The equipment, including a 350 pound gasoline motor-generator, then had to be manhandled over an up the remaining six miles of trail. There is no description of the transmitter or antenna used, but this effort was expended for a fifteen minute broadcast. The cortege departed the mountain by late afternoon, but the WGY crew didn't make it off the mountain with their "stuff" and the two horses until late the next afternoon.

Should BARA renew its intention to operate from the top of Mount Marcy? Possibly yes, possibly no. Regardless we should acquaint ourselves with the wonderful words of Orville N. Cobane from his poem *There Ain't No Road Up Marcy*:

Marcy is a majestic mountain; I'll admit its crown is bleak! Many people like to climb it Because it's New York's highest peak. I have climbed it many times And I give this reason why: I walk up that grand old mountain Just because I cannot fly!... For there ain't no road up Marcy.... Sitting up on top this mountain, There your pride would fairly glow: For the view is like an eagle's And at last you'll surely know — Why we want no road up Marcy!

From my limited reading — and the reports of my son — It is, was, and will always be a fantastic sight from the top. — DE Jack, WB2GHH

Proposed Increase in Vanity Call Sign Fees

THE FCC HAS PROPOSED INCREASING THE REGULATORY FEE TO APPLY FOR, RENEW OR REINSTATE AN AMATEUR RADIO VANITY CALL SIGN FROM \$14.50 TO \$16.30 THIS FALL. THE COMMISSION INCLUDED THE NEW FEE IN A NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING (NPRM) *Assessment and Collection of Regulatory Fees for Fiscal Year 2003* (MD 03-83), RELEASED MARCH 26. THE CLOSING DATE FOR COMMENTS ON THE NEW FEE SCHEDULE IS APRIL 25 WITH REPLY COMMENTS DUE BY MAY Ford Drake, AB2HS, BARA Public Service Coordinator reports that area Hams provided communications for the MS Walk on 6 April 2003. The SVARA repeater on 146.82 MHZ was utilized for the event that coursed it way through the West-

5. IN ITS NPRM THE FCC STATED THAT IT "ESTIMATE[S] THAT 9,800 APPLICANTS WILL APPLY FOR VANITY CALL SIGNS IN FY2003." IT FURTHER NOTES THAT THIS IS AN INCREASE FROM THE PREVIOUS FISCAL YEAR AND THAT THE AGENCY EXPECTS TO COLLECT REVENUES OF NEARLY \$160,000 (AN INCREASE OF ALMOST \$30,000 FROM THE PRECEDING FISCAL YEAR).

IF ALL GOES AS IT HAS IN THE PAST, THE FCC WILL ADOPT A REPORT AND ORDER ON THE NEW FEE SCHEDULE THIS SUMMER, AND THE NEW FEE WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE SOMETIME IN EARLY SEPTEMBER.

THE FCC NPRM ALSO SEEKS COMMENTS ON ITS EFFORTS TO REVIEW, STREAMLINE AND MODERNIZE ITS FEE ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES. AREAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST INCLUDE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE AGENCY'S ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SYSTEM.

UNTIL THE NEW SCHEDULE BECOMES EFFECTIVE, APPLICANTS FOR AMATEUR VANITY CALL SIGNS WILL CONTINUE TO PAY THE \$14.50 REGULATORY FEE PER CALL SIGN (PER 10-YEAR LICENSE TERM). THE FCC HAS STATED IN THE PAST THAT IT CONTINUES TO INCUR COSTS RELATED TO VANITY CALL SIGNS EVEN AFTER THEIR ISSUANCE OR RENEWAL AND THAT IT BELIEVES A REGULATORY FEE AT RENEWAL IS APPROPRIATE.

INTERESTED PARTIES MAY COMMENT VIA THE FCC'S ELECTRONIC COMMENT FILING SYSTEM (ECFS) AT <<[HTTP://WWW.FCC.GOV/CGB/ECFS](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs)>>. THE PROCEEDING NUMBER IS "03-83" IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING ELECTRONIC COMMENTS, YOU SHOULD SEND AN E-MAIL TO ecfs@fcc.gov AND INCLUDE THE WORDS "GET FORM" FOLLOWED BY YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS IN THE MESSAGE BODY. — FROM THE APRIL LETTER FOR 28 MARCH

The Tree Antenna

The following paragraph actually appeared in several editions of the *ICS Handbook for Radio Operators* (page 79 of the edition of 1923). It is offered for the consideration of those who find it necessary to operate in "Stealth Mode" or to make do with a compromise antenna system:

A modification of the vertical-wire antenna is the so-called Tree Type, where a conductor or lead-in is connected with the upper part of a tree. The tree juices seem to act as a fair conducting system and the top of the tree then forms a condenser plate. While this method of reception is undoubtedly novel, little else can be said for it. The tree actually plays a part, as experiments have shown that signals of equal strength were not received when the wire was disconnected from the tree trunk.

MS WALK Communications

Side streets of Binghamton. Hams were used at the rest stop, in the three "Sag Vans", the medical response vehicle, and in mobile units monitoring the entire course. In all Hams volunteered a total of 82 hours of their personal time and they traveled 172

miles to prepare for and execute this event. Participating Hams were: AB2HS, K2DLB, K2RUX, KB2YEN, KC2GIL, KC2HKB, KC2KUW, KC2KUY, KG2FY, N2KIU, N2RWH, N2RWK, N2WGM, WB2ALY and WB2GHH. — *Thanks to Jack, WB2GHH for this item*

New York State Antenna Bill

Although the Senate Version of this bill is reported close to passage, your help is still needed to move the New York State Antenna Bill (A 2662) in the New York State Assembly. The Bill is still in the Local Government Committee and has yet to be moved out for a vote. Although none of the members of the Committee are “local” Letters, Faxes, etc. can help to build support and to bring this bill to a successful vote. Please consider adding your voice to those already heard. — *report based on notes from the ARRL*

Building Blocks

If you have ever had a good idea for an electronics project, but been stumped by having to design “the whole shebang” around your idea you might want to take a look at some of the kits offered by Ten-Tec and Velleman.

Both of these companies offer a range of kits for building complete projects, however they also offer a number of small kits that can be used as “building blocks” for larger projects. Amplifiers, Squelch Circuits, Power Supplies can be had in kit form for use in creating the modules you need to make your project a reality. All you need to make your project complete is the “big picture” of what you want to make and an idea of the “subsystems” you want to interconnect.

Ten-Tec <<<http://www.tentec.com>>> is probably familiar to most of us as the manufacturer of a full line of Commercial and Amateur communications products, however they also supply a line of kits that are remarkable for their design and quality. You can select a few modules that you need or a complete kit that you can customize to your own purposes. Ten-Tec also sells enclosures of various types and chances are you can find a case for your finished project from the several lines that they offer. If you just need a case or two you might even want to order one of the “Fun Kits” just to get the discount offered when one (or more) enclosures are ordered with a kit.

The name Velleman may not be a familiar one, but this company (based in Belgium) offers a wide range of kits and tools. Their website is at <<<http://www.velleman.be>>> and they have several distributors in the United States. Although the overall quality of the kits is good, the manuals for at least some

of the kits seem to be mostly instructions on how to “stuff the board”, however the kits work and a wide range is available.

To give an idea of some projects to tease your creativity you might combine a Ten-Tec transceiver kit with a Velleman Remote Control system. Or you could use the Velleman Fiber-Optic Communications Link to provide a bullet-proof data link in a noisy environment.

Clear the bench and warm up the soldering iron. Try your hand at building something. Who knows, you might be the inventor of the “next big thing” in Amateur Radio.

Boatanchor Conversions

Many of our readers are fond of restoring and using vintage equipment, however the frequency scales of this equipment is often calibrated in the obsolete “Kilocycle” unit instead of the more modern metric units. To make this equipment easier to use on modern bands, the following *approximate* conversion process is provided:

- a. Divide the frequency in Cycles by the approximate Metric Conversion Factor 37.70.
 - b. Multiply the result by 12 (the number of inches in a foot).
 - c. Then multiply by pi (3.14159, the ratio of circumference to diameter of a circle).
 - d. Round the result and complete the circle by appending the “Hertz” unit to the result.
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Welcome New Members

Thus far this year our Club has gained five new members.

Please welcome: Don Perkins, N2IVW; Allen Lutins, KC2KLC; Bill Komar, KC2KUY; Sarah Koniewicz, KB2RLV; and Frank Pantano, KC2GVZ. — *Paul, N2NCB*

Meeting Notes

The program for the April General Meeting will be presented by Al, WA2FBT, and will cover EchoLink (such as has been implemented on the WA2VCS Machine) and related matters. This interesting subject has been receive much press of late and we invite everyone to stop by the hear what Al has to say.

Paul, N2NCB, informs us that the church needs our usual Meeting Room for a special service so we will move to either the “Youth Room” to Room Number 8 in the building. Remember, if there is no room in the lot the Lourdes Hospital Lot between the Church Lot and the River is available.

Finally, the deadline for the Esther Valky Scholarship is coming due. Please see an officer if an application is needed.

Club Officers and Committees			
President	Bob McCabe	KC2DSS	748-9808
Vice President	Jack Connors	WB2GHH	724-8822
Secretary	Ron Regan	N2RWK	722-6790
Treasurer	Paul Slocum	N2NCB	687-2057
Directors	Bob Handel	K2FU	693-4310
	Steve Orzelek	N2MSB	775-0281
	Ed Plesnar	KB2SCF	754-3810
	Mel Snitchler	WE2K	723-9612
W2OW Trustee	Frank Scoblick	N2HR	729-4249
Newsletter	Ed Plesnar	KB2SCF	754-3810

BARA, The Binghamton Amateur Radio Association is



an ARRL Affiliated Club

Next General Meeting

7:30 PM, Wednesday, April 16th Unitarian Universalist Church Riverside Drive, Binghamton, Next to Lourdes Hospital

Board Meeting

7:00 PM, Wednesday May 7th

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

Exam Session

7:00 PM Monday, April 28th

Vestal Public Library, Route 434 Vestal

1:30 PM, Saturday May 10th

Endicott Fire Station, Across from UE High School

BARA Dues

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

First Class

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