



BARA

Facts

Newsletter of the Binghamton Amateur Radio Association

August 2010

Website: <http://w2ow.org> OR <http://www.wtsn.binghamton.edu/bara>

President's Corner August 2010

From the diary of KC2KLC:

Day 96 – Still without a radio setup. Withdrawal symptoms more frequent and increasing in severity.

Okay, maybe it's not *that* severe, but I sure do miss not being able to get on the air, especially since I'm hearing that conditions are improving somewhat due to increased solar activity. I'm also reading about all sorts of cool VHF propagation that's happening, which I've not yet had the opportunity to explore.

I also miss shortwave monitoring. I've actually spent more of my radio time monitoring than communicating, and there's still a lot of interesting things to hear. Last week, radio station WSKG aired a segment from the NPR show *All Things Considered* about "numbers" stations (on which I gave a BARA presentation last year), which are used by spies and can still be monitored. I was away on vacation, so I missed hearing the story, but I downloaded a "podcast" (audio recording available via internet) and will get to hear it when I play it for the membership at the next BARA general meeting on September 15th (remember, this month's meeting is our annual picnic at Otsiningo Park in Binghamton on August 18th).

I mentioned being on vacation last week. To celebrate a quarter century since graduating college, my old college roommates, together with our spouses, went on a cruise to Alaska. I debated bringing some monitoring gear with me, but ultimately left it behind. At first I thought a scanner might be worthwhile, but I realized I'd spend far more time out at sea than

docked, so maritime VHF monitoring (non-existent here in inland Binghamton) would be limited. I also thought there might be some interesting shipboard communications to listen in on, but was assured by an acquaintance who has done so that all you generally hear is Phillipino and Indonesian chatter between the foreign crewmembers. I then considered my old portable longwave/medium wave/shortwave radio (a Realistic DX-440, aka Sangean 803A – it was my primary monitoring rig until I purchased an Icom R8500, at which time I moved it to my basement workshop), but upon picking it up, I decided it was just a bit too hefty, and would rather not have the extra weight to deal with. The new MP3 player I had with me is also an FM receiver – to bad it didn't also receive AM, or I could have tried some medium wave DXing!

But the ceiling and walls of my study are now patched and repainted, and as soon as I paint the trim and lay down some carpet, it'll be time to set up my new station. I've been talking to a lot of people about RF grounding, because my study is on the second floor, and I've read that if my ground wire is a half-wavelength at the frequency I'm transmitting on, I could get bad reflections (high SWR). Guess I'll have to take some measurements and do a bit of math (I hate doing math – it makes my head hurt). I'll let y'all know how it works out when I get it together!

73 de Allen Lutins KC2KLC
KC2KLC@LUTINS.ORG

QSO from the Board...

A reminder - the BARA picnic is coming up on August 18th (in lieu of the General Meeting). Our annual picnic will again be held under the pavilion at the far northern edge of Otsiningo Park in Binghamton. BARA will provide water, soft drinks, hamburgers/hot dogs, and plates/utensils - please bring a dish of your own to share! Formal start time will be at 5pm, but the pavilion is reserved for the entire day, so come on out any time.

A Letter from the Editor

Due to numerous requests, the "Back to the Basic's" section will change its format starting this with this edition. NO longer will you have to wait for the correct answers in the following months facts!!! The answers will be posted in the same edition as the questions.

73's de Kb2sin, William Jakaitis

BARA is spending a fair amount of money on postage to send out paper copies of the BARA Facts. The costs associated with this are contributing to our current budget deficit. If you are still receiving the paper version and have internet access, please consider reading the BARA Facts online (at W2OW.org) and canceling the mailed edition (by emailing Paul Slocum at n2ncb@stny.rr.com). By switching to the online edition, you'll not only save the club money, but also will gain quicker access to the BARA Facts. Thanks!

Upcoming BARA Programs

September 15th General Meeting:

**"Spies & Shortwave Radio"
Presented by: Allen Lutins**

Marconi and Sarnoff visit the SVARA Coffee Break - So To Speak

As many of you know, SVARA (which began as a repeater sub-committee of BARA) runs a coffee break (CB) each year over the Labor Day weekend to raise funds to maintain their repeater systems while providing a very worthwhile break to weary travelers. Hopefully SVARA will be issued the necessary permit by NYS DOT to do the same again this year. The desired location is the Whitney Point Rest Stop on I 81S. Seems the selection process has changed in the last couple of years. The competing organizations are unaware of being selected until a few days prior to the scheduled event. Not much time to organize. If the Labor Day date is assigned to another group, SVARA then may select another, less productive, weekend.

Volunteering at the coffee break is more than a valued public service. It is an opportunity to interface with other HAMS and with travelers from all over the world. Really. I like to interface with the travelers. Most travelers accept the invitation to talk awhile. At times a language barrier presents itself and is rapidly broken when the client spots a cookie or donut and whiffs the aroma of the continually perked coffee. Task Master Sharon, N2WGM, runs a very efficient, effective operation. Many do have difficulty understanding what a repeater is but some of the literature helps.

One of my most memorable coffee breaks was a few years ago. At that time Ford, AB2HS and his crew would not only have to set up covered counter space outside but also provide the potable water and generate electricity for the coffee pots. One year while I was on duty, outside, a tour bus pulled up and a gaggle of older persons exited and hurried to the rest room facilities. (I'm one of those types now.) After a few minutes a white haired, gracefully aged, well dressed and coiffured woman approached the counter aided by a four footed cane. I struck up a conversation with her. She recognized the fact that we were radio 'related' and said she knew a lot about radio and towers. She gleefully shared the following with me. She questioned if I knew anything about Marconi towers. I indicated I knew of a few of his towers and transmitting locations on the East coast. She asked, if I knew about the tower in Binghamton and what it was used for. I said I did. She described the placement of the towers in

Scranton and Binghamton and there use in attempting to communicate with moving trains. I asked how she knew about the towers. She indicated she worked for both of them. I said who? She said Marconi and Sarnoff. She went on to explain that when she was very, very young she worked at the Marconi Labs in New Jersey. She had the opportunity to speak with Marconi during one of his visits to the lab. She referred to him as either Senior or Monsignor Marconi. Later in her career she changed from a manufacturing position in the lab to an office position.

She knew of David Sarnoff and his attempts to communicate with the trains. He had by then worked for Marconi Communications for a number of years. She advanced in her office positions and, get this, became the personal secretary of David Sarnoff. She described the office area details and some personal traits of David. When I think of the Marconi tower in Binghamton, (standing proudly and firmly as a result of organic preventative maintenance actions) I tend to picture Marconi as THE key player. I was never aware that Davis Sarnoff was also very instrumental in those successful experiment sand many more later on. I had only associated with RCA and commercial broadcast fame. About then the driver of the tour bus tooted his hone and the elderly woman slowly made her way back to the bus.

Today I kick myself for not having the foresight then of acquiring the person's name and address in order to later conduct a follow up interview. A fantastic opportunity missed. I left a first class relic of the early radio era , a person who knew, talked and worked with Marconi and Sarnoff slipped through my hands. I can still see her in the bus window giving a little wave and smile as the bus pulled away.

de WB2GHH

Back to the Basics

In this article I would like to go over some basic questions, definitions and/or formulas. This will be old hat for most but for some, a refresher. I will split this up into Technician, General & the Extra class.

Technician Class

T1A03 – Which part of the FCC rules and regulations governing the Amateur Radio Service?

- A. Part 73
- B. Part 95
- C. Part 90
- D. Part 97

General Class

G4B08 – What instrument may be used to monitor relative RF output when making antenna and transmitter adjustments?

- A. A Field strength meter
- B. An antenna noise bridge
- C. A multimeter
- D. A Q meter

Extra Class

E4B07 – How much power is being absorbed by the load when a directional power meter connected between a transmitter and a terminating load reads 100 watts forward power and 25 watts reflected power

- A 100 Watts
- B 125 Watts
- C. 25 Watts
- D. 75 Watts

BARA-FEST

WANTED: Kenwood Microphone for a Kenwood TM-241 2 Meter Mobile. Email – Bill @ kb2sin@stny.rr.com with price.

For Sale:: Heathkit SG-8 signal generator (\$10)
Details and photos at lutins.org/forsale, or call me at
607-729-4817 >

ANSWERS to August Review Questions

Technician - D
General - A
Extra - D

2010 Club Officers

President	Allen Lutins	KC2KLC	729-4817
Vice President	James Lawson	KC2JED	761-5595
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	John Carrington	WB2SGS	648-8364
W2OW Trustee	Mel Snitchler	WE2K	723-9612
Editor	William Jakaitis	KB2SIN	648-2112

Next General Meeting

NO AUGUST MEETING: PICNIC

Otsiningo Park – 5 PM

Board Meeting

7:00 PM, Wednesday August 4th

Conference Room, WSKG Studios, 501 Gates Road, Vestal

Exam Session

Monday August 30th– 7PM

Vestal Public Library, Route 434 Vestal

BARA Dues

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

Local Repeater Nets

146.73 (PL-100) MHz STAR Net (NTS Feeder) Every

Evening at 6:30 PM Local Time

146.82 (PL 146.2) MHz BRAT Net (Informal BARA) Sunday

Evening at 8:00 PM Local Time

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

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