

The Link

April 2005



The Official Journal of the Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Association, Inc.

This Month's Program: SPLAT!

How's that for an eye-catcher? Just what is SPLAT?!? Well, come to this month's meeting on Monday, April 18th and find out!

SPLAT! is an RF Signal Propagation, Loss, And Terrain analysis tool for the spectrum between 20 MHz and 20 GHz. It is a free (yes, troops, free!) Linux program available for download from the Internet. SPLAT! provides site engineering data such as the great circle distances and bearings between sites, antenna elevation angles (uptilt), depression angles (downtilt), antenna height above mean sea level, antenna height above average terrain, bearings and distances to known obstructions, path loss based on the Longley-Rice Irregular Terrain Model, and minimum antenna height requirements needed to establish line-of-sight communication paths absent of obstructions due to terrain.

BARRA member Bill Brown, KB2TOY, has been working with the SPLAT! program for a few months now, plotting the coverage of our repeater systems for the Technical Committee. However, since the program is available to anyone for free, you can use it to plot your own RF coverage from home. All you need is a computer running the Linux operating system. (By the way, guys & gals, that's a free download, too!)

So, come on out and see just what areas our repeaters cover, and how you, too, can get in on SPLAT!

"SPLAT! Because the world isn't flat!"

(Thanks to <http://www.qsl.net/kd2bd/splat.html> for some of the background info about SPLAT!)

Dick Diehl, WB2JCB Silent Key

Last month we were saddened to learn of the death of Dick Diehl, WB2JCB, a long time BARRA member. Dick was 76.

A marine engine technician for many years, Dick (on the left in the photo at right) also worked at Lafayette Radio with our president WA2ZSJ "way back when." Dick was very active in BARRA for many years, serving on its board of directors in the mid-1980s, and with Leigh, KC2VS (pictured here on the right with Dick), they were the dynamic duo that served up refreshments at the general membership meetings at the church for quite a long time.



After retirement from the marine industry Dick delivered auto parts for a local supply outfit and continued to attend BARRA meetings and participate in activities, most recently this past summer at Cole Road the day Chet's shack was lifted and placed on ties.

Dick will be missed by the club and by his many friends in BARRA.

Have You Checked Out the BARRA Tech Net Yet?

The Wednesday night BARRA Tech Net is fast becoming one of the area's most popular amateur radio repeater nets and check-in totals have been steadily climbing over its 18 sessions held so far. Greg Miller, K2GTM, is proving to be a most capable net control for this loosely directed net.

The premise of the Tech Net is to provide answers to technical questions that net participants may have, whether simple or highly complex. Questions on recent Tech Net sessions have included advice on particular ham rigs, questions on power supply repair, discussions about Digital TV (DTV), and there's even been a bonus ham radio trivia question the last few weeks courtesy of Ted, WA2HKS. There's rumors of a Tech Net web site in the works to post check in lists, URLs of web sites referred to in the sessions, and other material related to topics discussed on the net. Stay tuned for further announcements about that.

All hams invited to participate in the Tech Net, not just BARRA members. No one person has all the answers. You just may be the one to have the answer for someone else's question, and pocket protectors are always welcome!

The Tech Net meets every Wednesday night at 8 PM on the 146.91/224.82/444.00 repeater system. Stations may come and go at will; you don't have to have permission to check out.



Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Association, Inc.

Club Officers & Directors

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Voice Repeaters

WB2JQK	PL 107.2	29.68 -	Boston
K2ISO		145.17 -	Wethersfield
K2DSN	PL 107.2	146.73 -	Niagara Falls
W2EUP		146.91 -	Boston
N2YDM	PL 107.2	147.00 +	Kenmore
W2EUP		224.82 -	Boston
WR2AHL	PL 110.9	442.00 +	Wethersfield
WB2DSS	PL 151.4	443.925 +	Niagara Falls
WA2HKS		444.00 +	Buffalo
WB2DSS	PL 151.4	444.75 +	Kenmore

BARRA Tech Net

Join the BARRA Technical crew on the 146.91/444.00 system Wednesdays at 8 PM for answers to your technical questions.

RAWNY Net

Stop by Monday evenings at 7:00 pm and join the RAWNY club's net which meets on our 146.91 and 444.00 repeaters.

BARRA on the Internet

<http://barra.hamgate.net>

Club Calls

BARRA holds club calls W2EUP and K2ISO in honor and memory of two of its founders, Gil Boelke, W2EUP, and Hugh Wilson, K2ISO.

Don't Forget to Get Your BARRA Mug!



These great looking, sturdy, quality ceramic mugs sport the BARRA buffalo logo, are dishwasher safe, and let you show your club colors in style!

Only \$5.00 Each!

Available at all club meetings

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The BARRA E-Mail List Serve

To join, send an e-mail message to:

majordomo@hamgate.net

with the message subscribe barra in the main body of the note.

To send a message to the list subscribers, address your e-mail to:

barra@hamgate.net

The Link is published eight times a year by BARRA, the Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Association, Inc. The opinions expressed herein, however, are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors or membership of BARRA. Letters to the editor are solicited and must be signed. Names and addresses will be withheld if requested. Material for *The Link* should be sent to the Editor:

Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Ass'n
P.O. Box 507
N. Tonawanda, NY 14120-0507

or may be submitted electronically to the editor's e-mail address: ka2wft@arrl.net. The editor may be reached by telephone in the evenings at (716) 834-2664.

DISTRIBUTION

The Link is available in both print and electronic formats. If you wish to receive *The Link* in the Adobe cross-platform PDF format by e-mail instead of regular mail, please notify the editor at ka2wft@arrl.net.

ARTICLES

Articles for the *Link* on any subject, technical or general interest, are always welcome and encouraged. When submitting material to the *Link*, please type it or submit it electronically, if possible. Remember that the editor reserves the right to make necessary changes including reformatting and condensing for space and that Full Membership may be obtained by writing articles.

LINK DEADLINES

All material must be submitted to the Editor by the end of the month previous to the issue (e.g. December 31st for the January issue). Of course, if the material is received earlier than that date, you will have a better chance of getting your article in the next issue. All advertising is subject to the same deadline.

ADVERTISING

Want-Ads are free to BARRA members and are published in the next available issue. Ads from other hams are accepted free on a space-available basis. Ads appearing in other club newsletters with which BARRA has an exchange agreement are reprinted on a space-available basis.

Display advertising is available at the prevailing rates. Business card size is currently \$2.00/mo; full page is \$16.00/mo. Contact the editor for rates for other sizes.

DUES

Basic membership rate: \$20.00

Family member in the same household as first member: \$3.00

Discounts from basic rate

Senior Citizen (65+): -5.00

Disabled: -5.00

Voting member: -5.00

Full-time student with ID: -5.00

Each new member recommended: -1.00

Note: A voting member is a member who has performed a service for BARRA (e.g. helped out at an activity, written a *Link* article, etc.).

WNYSORC Meeting Report

Ben Bass, N2YDM

The Western New York - Southern Ontario Repeater Council, better known as WNYSORC, held one of its two meetings for the year on April 10th in Lockport. This is the first meeting held in the US in many years. Thanks to the efforts of Jim Laughlin, N2ETE and Jim Volkosh, Director of Emergency Services for Niagara County, we had use of the Niagara County Emergency Services training facility. This is a state of the art building and proved to be an excellent venue for the meeting. We hope to make this an annual event.

If you're not familiar with WNYSORC, it is the coordinating body responsible for coordinating the use of Amateur repeater and link frequencies within most of Western New York and Southern Ontario. Once it is determined that use of a frequency will not cause interference within our territory, the frequency is cross-coordinated with the adjacent area councils so there is no interference with operations in their areas.

The meeting was well attended by 20 Americans and 11 Canadians, including several representatives from UNYREPCO, the coordinating body to the East of us in New York. BARRA was well represented at the meeting by myself, WB2DSS, KC2JUF, K2GTM and WB2VLV. Rich, WB2DSS, is the frequency coordinator and I maintain the database for the group.

Our territory includes Monroe County, west of the Genesee River and outside the City of Rochester. There was a proposal floated to transfer this portion of Monroe County to UNYREPCO, who already coordinates the rest of Monroe County. Two members of UNYREPCO polled the repeater trustees who would be impacted by the move. We anticipated a heated discussion but, in the end, 60% of the trustees decided that a move was not in their best interests and the proposal is now history.

There was the usual mix of interference issues, coordinations, purged pairs and administrative matters.

In another matter, we also have a number of Shared-Non-Protected Frequency (SNPF) pairs. These were intended for low power, low profile, temporary operation. Unfortunately, these pairs are, for the most part, not being used as intended. There are a number of "permanent" repeaters on these pairs. In one case, the FCC had to order a ham in Niagara County to cease operations on one of these pairs. I introduced a policy change to eliminate most of these pairs and make them available for coordination. Since it is a policy change, it will be voted on at the October meeting, in Welland, Ontario.

Please visit the group's web site, www.wnysorc.org for more information.

Remember that the Link is available as an emailed full color PDF document attachment by email. The club saves postage costs and you receive a sharp-looking unmangled newsletter copy. To get your next Link by email, contact the editor at ka2wft@arrl.net



Hobby Highlights

Richard Sellers, KG2OR

Since the advent of BPL technology we have seen the amateur radio community confront the commercial rollout of BPL, which interferes with our amateur bands. By now you are probably familiar with many aspects of the BPL issue; especially what the ARRL is trying to do to impede deploying BPL in amateur fields. Even though the ARRL has made good arguments for moving BPL away from amateur bands the FCC has condoned its existence, and has made rules for its uses.



Most of us have heard what BPL interference sounds like when it is detected by receivers. It blanks out our reception. Our overall position will remain the same: Keep BPL away from our bands.

There is a wealth of new information arising from BPL development in Australia. In San Diego, the Gas and Electric company is planning to make BPL available to all its customers. I found this information at www.arnesline.com. This site also has on file some articles from amateur operators concerning BPL in Australia, and it appears that BPL is having spatial problems between buildings, it is expensive to implement, and mass marketing may not be feasible. Cable and fiber optics are going to be price competitive, and might very well be lower. The market war has yet to be waged. The key issue within the Internet world is managing the development. Look at the following web sites for more information. BPL signals can be subject to effects from temperatures, and produce static discharges from transformers. www.caslon.com.au/powerlinenote.htm and www.zdnet.com.au/news/business/0,39023166,39179217,00.htm. BPL will develop. However, investment analysts may need more real time observations before they open the bank drawer. Cable and fiber optics are competing with wireless technology and should be at good prices while making available a basis for stable communication. The amateur radio community will uphold their position to alleviate BPL interference. It will be interesting to see what San Diego Gas and Electric does with BPL. The development of BPL in this area will seek maximum exposure to its customers, but will our radios tolerate it in the atmosphere?

73 de KG2OR.

Recruit a Member!

On page five of this issue is a copy of the BARRA membership application. Please pass it on to a friend interested in amateur radio. Having a license is NOT a requirement!

Unfortunately the ham population at large is aging and indeed we have lost some long time members in recent months. There are many hams in WNY who have no club affiliation and perhaps you know one or two. Encourage them to join BARRA and to check out the Tech Net and our meetings and our summer picnic coming up in July. Membership applications are always available on the BARRA web site, too!

Volunteers Still Needed for Memorial Weekend Soccer Tournament

As has been reported in the last few issues of *The Link*, BARRA has been asked to provide communications at the annual Amherst International Memorial (AIM) Soccer Tournament, Saturday and Sunday, May 28-29, 2005. The primary duty of each volunteer will be to report the results of soccer matches held at four different venues to the net control station at the fifth venue. The results from each match will be used to determine other matches throughout the weekend. The tournament begins at 8 AM each day, with the last games ending around 8 PM each day. There will be many matches taking place throughout the day at each site.



A tent and table will be provided at each location for the use of the ham volunteer and the tournament field marshal, from whom we will get the results to report. We will use 146.91/444.00. Any emergencies will be handled by cellular telephone calls to 911 by tournament officials. Previously event organizers relied on cellular telephones donated by various cell phone providers, but that resource has dried up in the wake of cutbacks in the general business climate, and we are told it was less than a reliable source anyway because folks entrusted with the phones would forget to charge them, forget to hand them over to the next person, etc. leaving tournament officials with no way of contacting a field quickly.

Below are listed the match sites, and again the tournament runs from 8 AM to 8 PM each day. All slots will be filled on a first-come basis, so if you have preferred time and/or location it is best to contact your editor ASAP. As little or as much time as you can spare that weekend will be welcome and appreciated. We are hoping to have someone from the tournament staff to come speak with BARRA and event volunteers at our next general meeting on Monday, April 18th.

Soccer Tournament Sites, all located in the Town of Amherst:

— North French soccer field is the HQ/Net control location

The four sites needing volunteers are:

— Williamsville North HS, corner of Hopkins & Dodge Rds.

— Sweet Home Middle School, Maple Rd nr. Sweet Home.

— Maple East Elementary School, Maple Rd nr. Youngs

— ECC North Campus, Main St & Youngs Rd.

Please contact your editor, KA2WFT at ka2wft@arrl.net or 834-2664 evenings ASAP. Remember that participation in an event like this qualifies members for voting membership and a \$5 discount on next year's dues!

Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Association

Post Office Box 507
North Tonawanda, NY 14120-0507

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Call _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip _____ Date _____

Telephone No. _____ E-Mail Address _____

Can we print your phone # in the club roster? YES NO

I wish to receive the newsletter in PDF format by e-mail attachment YES NO

I hereby make application for membership to the Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Association and agree to abide by the By-Laws, Rules and Regulations set forth by the FCC and this Association and shall to the best of my ability work towards the advancement of Amateur Radio and the goals set forth by the Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Association.

Your Signature _____

Recommended by _____

BARRA dues structure: Initial Application \$20.00 (US Funds. Please deduct \$5.00 for each item below that applies)

- Senior Citizen (Age 65+)
- Disabled Member
- Full-time student with ID

Total enclosed dues, less any of the above (if applicable) \$ _____

Applications are voted upon once a month at our Board meetings. You will be advised of your status by the Membership Chairman.

Are you a member of any other Amateur group? If so, which ones? _____

Are you a ham? _____ When did you become a ham? _____

License Class _____ What bands/modes do you operate? _____

Member of ARES _____ RACES _____ ARRL _____

Other hobbies and interests _____

What is your occupation? _____

Name wanted on your name tag (first name, one only, please) _____

Why do you want to become a member of BARRA?

Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Ass'n

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Calendar of Events

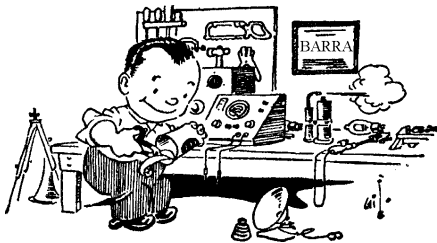
GENERAL MEETINGS

General meetings are held at St. Bartholomews Episcopal Church, Brighton and Fries Roads, Tonawanda, across from Kenmore East HS. Doors open at 7:00 pm for rag chew, business meeting at 7:30, with program following.

Monday, April 18, 2005 -- Presentation by BARRA member Bill Brown, KB2TOY, about the free Linux program called SPLAT! which is used for signal propagation study over irregular terrain.

Monday, June 20, 2005 -- Meeting program TBA.

Monday, July 18, 2005 -- Annual BARRA Mobile Clinic & Picnic at our Cole Road repeater site.



**NO GENERAL MEETINGS IN MARCH,
MAY, AUGUST OR NOVEMBER**
The *Link* is not published in those months.

BOARD MEETINGS

Board Meetings are held the second Monday of every month at the **Athens Family Restaurant**, 2801 Harlem Rd, Cheektowaga, between Genesee Street and George Urban Blvd. The meetings begin at 7:30 PM and **members are always welcome** to sit in on a meeting or bring concerns to the board.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Technical Committee has formal meetings the first Friday of every month at 7:00 PM in Room 117 of the BOCES Potter Road Career and Technical Center, 705 Potter Road, West Seneca (Corner of Slade, Potter and Orchard Park Rds). Come on out to BARRA's own CCITT (Coffee & Crumpets Interrupted by Technical Talk), where progress of current projects is evaluated and new projects are planned. The meetings usually conclude with munchies at a nearby restaurant.

What is SPLAT?!?
Come to the general meeting
Monday, April 18th!