

The Link

July 2010



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

Time for the Mobile Clinic!

Good heavens, it's summertime again and it's time for the Annual Mobile Clinic and Picnic! Monday, July 19th is the date of the 2010 edition of BARRA's annual summer meeting, picnic and personal rig work party.

Born in an era of driftly radio gear, the Mobile Clinic was a must-do activity for nearly everyone with VHF or UHF gear, especially mobile gear being rattled around in vehicles. Rigs of bygone years needed periodic tweaking and tuning to stay on frequency, true up deviation and to reset audio levels and the Mobile Clinic was a way for club members to do this if they didn't have the necessary test equipment to do this work at home. While today's rigs don't need the almost constant attention to keep them functioning well, it doesn't hurt to check a rig once in a while, especially if it's new. Many folks have found brand-new rigs out of the box to have less than optimal levels set.

The BARRA Technical Committee will have a selection of test gear available for use. Make sure you have the manuals for your rig(s) if you plan to work on them, plus any specialized tools that you may need for your particular radio.

For the picnic part of the evening, it's a bring-your-own event. The club will have grills and condiments (from a well-known local hot dog emporium). The fun gets started around 5:30 PM and lasts until dark or thereabouts. Rain date will be the following Monday if necessary. Listen to the 146.91/444.00 system or watch the email lists for any announcements if the weather is iffy.

We've been having great summer weather so far, let's hope it also extends to this year's Mobile Clinic and Picnic ... see you there!

Directions to Cole Road Repeater Site

In this day and age of GPS devices it seems rather redundant to print the directions to the repeater site (especially when your editor is short on space!). The address is 8741A Cole Road, Boston, NY. If you need detailed directions, head to the BARRA web site, <http://barra.hamgate.net>, click on the newsletter link and look up any July issue from a previous year.

Empire State Games to Use BARRA Repeaters

The New York State Empire Games will be in Buffalo from July 21st through the 25th and will, as in previous years, be using ham radio operators for communication at the event venues. The Games people will be using the BARRA repeater system, primarily 146.91/444.00 along with 146.73. The communications will take place each day from 7 AM through 10 PM or later. If you have regular skeds on the machines, please note that you will need to move your personal traffic during those days and times.

BARRA has been working with the Games communications folks in getting their HQ station set up and several members have signed up to work the venues.

Hobby Highlights

Richard Sellers, KG2OR

I wrote about QSL cards in 2003. Now "Logbook of the World," and E-QSL cards have changed the way we compile our receipts. Compare then and now along with the computer revolution. The price of mail may have contributed to the change. The following is my 2003 "Hobby Highlights."



How is your QSL card collection? Is it in a box, or hiding in a drawer, or closet? Mine are hanging on a string, with paper clips, in an attic. If you are hanging them on a wall then read, 2/73, *QST*, pg. 46 "Easy method of mounting QSL cards on wall without causing marks." It was written by Joseph Vucco, W8HCL. RAWNY's QSL design by Dick Leach, AA2FZ, reminded me of my QSL inventory computer program I wrote and published in *QSO* during the early 1980s. I ran received and not received QSL cards from my log book through a BASIC computer program, and it printed not returned QSL cards. I easily caught up on my QSL card inventory. Further, I took a look at the ARRL periodical index, and found some interesting hints and kinks, and strays focusing upon QSL cards. There is a history of QSL information in the *QST* magazine. For example, I found these titles, and you might want to look them up! 12/64, *QST*, pg. 71, "Homemade QSL cards" by Alex Burr, K3NKX; 8/64, *QST*, pg. 86, WA1ALB, "QSL Cards as Art Form?"; 3/54, *QST*, pg. 49, W6OPU, "Mickey Mouse QSL Card"; 2/58, *QST*, pg. 51, "Silk Screen QSL Cards", by W0BMW; 4/29, *QST*, pg. 28 "Zinc engraving QSL cards" by W7OQ; 8/27, *QST*, pg. 31, "Photo mounts for QSL cards"; 7/95, *QST*, pg. 13, "Your Move (Home-brew QSL card)"; by Emerson Hoyt, WX7E; 7/95, *QST*, pg. 73, "Making your own QSL cards," by Scott Hotchkiss, KR4GJ. Where are QSL cards going? Basically, in the mail! From there it is anyone's guess as to how long it will take to receive them. I usually get domestic cards within a couple of weeks, and DX cards take longer. I remember getting one a year after a QSO. I am not the only one with stories. How about 19 years! 10/76 *QST*, pg. 31, "19 years to receive QSL card," or "Slow QSL card delivery," 12/56, *QST*, pg. 14, W5APM received card from W2LS from 1926, by Tilton. How about QSL card returned after six years, "insufficient Postage," 12/55, *QST*, pg. 178!

It is obvious, QSL cards are a center of attention in our hobby. If you send a QSL card to an operator, you should request his, or hers in return. The game is how many cards can you collect? Some hobby hunters look for countries, counties, or cities. You can even obtain awards for your efforts, "All States," or the DX "Century Club." What a hobby! Good hunting, and good luck!

73 de KG2OR

Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Association, Inc.

Club Officers & Directors

President	Nelson Oldfield WA2ZSJ '12	634-6394
Vice President	Doug Alderdice KA2WFT '12	834-2664
Secretary	Charles Grammer KA2CQQ '11	886-4513
Treasurer	Ed Swan W2EAS '10	836-0417
Director	Damon Edwards, AB2UK '12	847-2140

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Link Editor	Doug Alderdice KA2WFT
WNYSORC Representative Chair	Ben Bass N2YDM
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Activities List	Ed Swan W2EAS
ID Badges	W2EAS
Erie County Emer. Coord.	Vince Harzewski N2JRS
Erie County RACES Officer	Gene Kremzier N2OBW

Voice Repeaters

W2EUP	PL 107.2	29.68-	Boston
K2ISO		145.17-	Wethersfield
K2ILH	PL 107.2	146.73-	N. Tonawanda
W2EUP		146.91-	Boston
N2YDM	PL 107.2	147.00+	Kenmore
W2EUP		224.82-	Boston
WR2AHL	PL 110.9	442.00+	Wethersfield
WA2HKS		444.00+	Buffalo
WB2DSS	PL 151.4	444.75+	Kenmore

APRS Digi-peater

K2ILH-2	144.39	Amherst
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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.

CBS-Scanners-Ham-Marine-Business Radios-Radar Detectors

HIRSCH'S

WNY's Largest Communication Store Since 1961
219 California Drive - Williamsville, NY 14221

Hours-M,T,Th,F 10-5:30; Sat. 10-5:00; Closed Wed.

(716) 632-1189

Sales - Service - Installation

WA2OLW (Leprechaun Graphics, 675-3764) still has BARRA jackets and T-shirts available.

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

The BARRA E-Mail List Serves

To join, send look up the group "barrabflo" on

<http://groups.yahoo.com>

The Tech Committee also has an email group, BARRA-Tech, on Yahoo Groups. Or, email the editor to receive an invite to join either or both groups.

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. Regular mail recipients are charged \$4 beyond their dues.

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 \$2.50/mo; full page is \$20.00/mo. Contact the editor for rates for other sizes.

DUES

Basic membership rate: \$25.00

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

US Mail newsletter delivery: add \$4.00

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.).



Getting a Visual on ISS

Doug Alderdice, KA2WFT

Ever head outside and watch the International Space Station (ISS) cruise by? No? It's easy and requires no fancy equipment!

I thought that this was something that "everyone" had done at least once since it gets mentioned during the weather forecasts of a local TV station. However, at a Technical Committee meeting this past winter when someone suggested heading outside to watch an ISS pass occurring around the beginning of the meeting, I was surprised at the number of meeting attendees who hadn't done this before... and these are the Tech Committee folks. Hmm, maybe not "everyone" has tried this.

What's required? Just a schedule of visible passes, clear skies and your eyes. What you will see is a bright, moving "star" that will be in easy view for about five minutes or so even in bright, city-lit skies. Typical ISS passes have a brightness of -3 to -1 magnitude. As a comparison, the stars in the Big Dipper have a magnitude of about +1, so the ISS is usually a lot brighter than the stars in the Big Dipper (the smaller the magnitude number, the brighter the object).

Where to get a schedule? Head on over to <http://www.heavens-above.com>, a great web site for schedules for just about any satellite "up there," plus other neat celestial data like sun and moon times. Once at that site you need to set your location, which is easy because the site has a vast database of locations world wide. Click on the "from database" link in the Configuration section near the top of the page, then select the country (hint: Click on "U" for United States, then click on the "United States" link) and then enter "Buffalo" (or another town if you are far from Buffalo) in the search string field. All the Buffaloes in the US will come up and click on Buffalo, NY and voila! The coordinates for Buffalo will be set and you'll be returned to the home page. One of the first lines in the "Satellites" section of the page is a link to 10-day predictions for the ISS. Click on that and you'll be presented with a schedule of visible ISS passes for the next 10 days. At this writing the ISS will not have visible passes in this area after July 15th, but that will last only a few weeks. It'll be back so keep checking!

You can also get pass schedules for ISS from ham satellite tracking computer programs like Orbitron (<http://www.stoff.pl/>). Orbitron will indicate in the generated pass schedules whether ISS will be visible or eclipsed and its brightness magnitude. There are also satellite tracking apps available for iOS devices (iPhone and iPod Touch) in the Apple App Store for even more convenience. Note that not all tracking programs will indicate whether a satellite will be visible.

There you have it. Some easy and impressive entertainment for yourself, your family or guests. Plus, tracking ISS visually gives you some practice in Low Earth Orbiting (LEO) satellite tracking, which you can apply to working the LEO ham satellites like AO-27, AO-51 and SO-50.

Have fun!

Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Ass'n

Post Office Box 507

N. Tonawanda, NY 14120-0507



FIRST CLASS MAIL

Calendar of Events

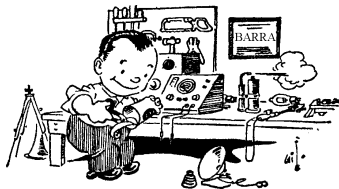
GENERAL MEETINGS

General meetings are held at St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church, 2368 Eggert Road, Tonawanda, near Sheridan Drive. Doors open at 7:00 pm for rag chew, business meeting at 7:30, with program following.

Monday, July 19, 2010 -- Annual BARRA Mobile Clinic and Picnic at the Cole Road repeater site.

Monday, September 20, 2010 -- Annual report of the Technical Committee to the membership.

Monday, October 18, 2010 -- Annual meeting of BARRA, Inc. for the purpose of hearing reports and electing board directors.



NO GENERAL MEETINGS IN JANUARY, MARCH, MAY, AUGUST OR NOVEMBER

The *Link* is not published in March, May, August and November.

BOARD MEETINGS

Board Meetings are held the first Tuesday 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.

Save the Date!

Monday, July 19th

**THE ANNUAL BARRA
MOBILE CLINIC & PICNIC**

at the Cole Road repeater site

Bring a friend