

The Link

July 2012



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

It's Time for the Annual Mobile Clinic and Picnic!

The sultry weather is upon us and Field Day is but a memory so that means we next turn our attention toward the Annual Mobile Clinic and Picnic. Monday, July 16th is the date for the 2012 edition of BARRA's annual summer get-together.

Born in an era of homebrew and converted commercial radio gear, the Mobile Clinic part of our event was a must-do activity for nearly everyone with VHF and especially UHF sets, and definitely any mobile or handheld radios. 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 that 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 audio and deviation 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. The microcontroller-based rigs of today each require a different procedure for tune-up so the manuals are a must. The Tech Committee folks are good, but they don't know every rig out there!

For the picnic part of the evening, it's a bring-your-own event. The club will have a grill and there's rumors of some condiments from a well-known local hot dog establishment. 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 146.91/224.82/444.00 system or watch the email lists for any last-minute announcements if the weather is iffy.

If you come out to any BARRA event this year, make it this one! It's a great way to meet other members, check out the repeater site, and maybe tweak a rig or two. See you there!

DIRECTIONS: The Cole Road site is at 8741A Cole Road, Boston, NY. Detailed directions can be found in previous July issues of *The Link* at the club web site: <http://barra.hamgate.net/link.htm>

Pictures, pictures, pictures!

See Pages 4 and 5

*For a collection of scenes from recent
BARRA events!*

Ted and Bill's Excellent Adventure

Bill Pike, K2ILH

There's not a lot of attention needed for systems that operate automatically. Sometimes so little that the people who put them in are dead and gone when they finally decide they want some human company. Such is the case for the APRS digipeater operated on behalf of BARRA as K2ILH-2.

There are a great number of amateur stations operating APRS stations: mobiles of course, weather stations, and fixed stations promoting activities and resources for ham operators. Many of these emit signals of wide geographical interest and benefit from a digital repeater's function to extend the range of their signals. The APRS digipeater operated on behalf of BARRA has been a particularly prominent part of the system for many years, running day and night to serve our needs.

This installation was originally commissioned by Sid, W2ICZ, who signed SK several years ago. In his later years he wanted the digi to keep running for the use of his fellow operators and endeavored to provide such support. The last time I visited the site of the digi was in 2007. There had been no reported problems, so it was mostly a courtesy visit. The equipment can be adjusted and controlled remotely. Since then there have been a few short interruptions which corrected themselves, but in June of this year an extended interruption occurred.

Several visits were made to the site to ascertain the cause of the problem. The first was short: cycling the main power restored operation. During the second, it was seen that occasionally the power supply would cycle at the start of a transmission. The supply was replaced with another of the same model. The rest of the system was swapped out for cleanup and bench test. Finally, it was reinstalled on June 26th.

Ted, WA2HKS, was invited in the interest of providing a second maintenance resource and contact who would be familiar with the location and access. It was a beautiful day and we were so coordinated that, even arriving from different locations we met at the expressway off-ramp without stopping. We parked side by side in the lot and proceeded to the building. Up on the roof the view was excellent. What a great site for a radio!

After a brief discussion the equipment enclosure was unlocked and operation was observed. Ted had his analyzer and checked the antenna out. The antenna is a homebrew configuration using copper pipe and was supposed to cover the 2 meter and 3/4 meter band. It checked as not too good a match, but usable. This site was originally a packet relay station before the packet network idea lost popularity. There are also a couple of UHF Yagi antennas and a defunct weather sensor.

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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	Bruce Johnson N2TFG '14 585-451-1736
Treasurer	Ed Swan W2EAS '13 836-0417
Director	Bob Becker K2VGZ '12 681-4419

Committees & Chairs

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

Voice Repeaters

AB2UK	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.

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

Don't Forget to Get Your BARRA Mug!



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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.).



Making New Hams

Dave Halik, W2ZZA

Many hams share a common history when it comes to their interest in ham radio and electronics. It seems that around the age of about 13 boys and some girls start getting interested in ham radio. Just what sparks interest is hard to say. Some common threads are: I became interested after seeing a neighbor's ham antenna, I was introduced to ham radio in scouting, or I saw a *CQ* magazine in the news rack and got interested. Whatever brought you to the hobby it's likely you still remember the first time you saw another ham's shack first hand. It's likely you still remember the word of encouragement and advice you got from the one ham that took you under his or her wing and helped you to get licensed. The stories and experiences are as varied and diverse as the ham community itself. However one thing is sure you got your ticket and you're a ham radio operator now. With the license come some responsibilities, following the FCC rules and abiding by on air etiquette are important. However there is one additional responsibility that is not written but implied: *Making New Hams*.



If we fail to make new hams we will have fewer and fewer people to talk to in the days and years to come. There are many ways to help others get licensed. Some hams act as VEs and test new hams, others act as Elmers (mentors) and teach new hams, others inspire potential newbies through enthusiastic encouragement. This is called *talking up the hobby* or *selling it*.

The future of the hobby is in our hands. We can sit back and let the distractions of other technologies drain the life blood out of ham radio or take action and make the hobby strong for years to come. Ask yourself, how many new hams have I made?

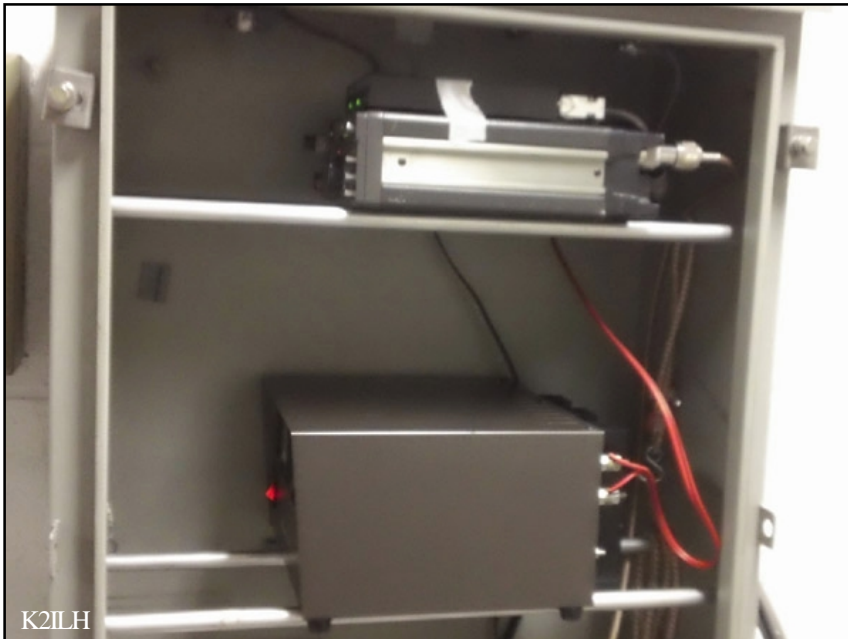
Ted & Bill, continued from Page 1

We swapped the original equipment back into service. It had operated without a problem for three days on the bench. It is really hard to find someone that will give a report on the signal when you need it but we had made previous arrangement with Doug, KA2WFT, to make an evaluation. He stepped right up when we called and reported some hum. It is noisy at the site but after his report, we heard it too. Hum! Ted was taking some pictures (still and video) when the power supply cycled. Wow! Just like the other supply. The system only draws eight amps in high power transmit and these are rated at 10 amps. Looks like the power supply was inadequate, and from the start too! That could explain the intermittent problems.

So ... not being far from home, I hopped in the car and fetched an Astron 20M. Meanwhile Ted was recreating on the deck, and giving me driving advice from his perch high above. After squeezing the Astron into the cabinet and making other accommodations for the equipment we got it back on the air. So far it looks like it should be good for another five years plus. Maybe more than us.

Pictures!

A number of scenes from a variety of recent BARRA events. The club and its membership has been very busy lately!
Photo credits as noted.



K2ILH

K2ILH-2 APRS digipeater equipment at the UB Amherst Campus. See K2ILH's article on Page 1 about recent repairs at this site.



W2EAS

AB2UK surveys the next area to work on the finishing trim on Chet's Shack at the Cole Road site.



WA2HKS enjoys the summer weather atop the K2ILH-2 digi site.



K2ILH



W2ZZA

KA2CQQ pauses during installation of the green board in Chet's Shack.



W2ZZA

The hearty work crew at one of the first Cole Road work parties this year. Pictured L-R: KC2PIT, KA2CQQ, K2ILH, WA2HKS, N3AU, N2TFG, W2AFJ, W2ZZA.

Field Day Photos!

Photo credits as noted



KG9NZ and KC2ZEX man the Field Day operating positions inside the renovated Chet's Shack.



More Field Day action inside the shack. Pictured L-R: KB2TOY, KG9NZ, KC2ZEX, W2ZZA



KC2PIT checks out the 6M Field Day action.

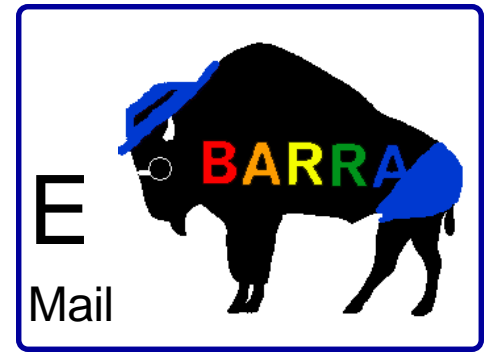


KC2PIT, W2ZZA and KA2WFT escape the heat and sun under the canopy at Field Day.

Buffalo Amateur Radio Repeater Ass'n

Post Office Box 507

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Calendar of Events

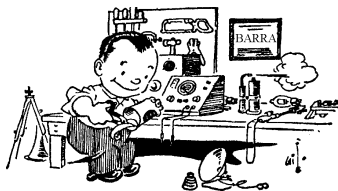
GENERAL MEETINGS

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 16, 2012 -- Annual BARRA Mobile Clinic and Picnic at the Cole Road repeater site. Bring your picnic grub and your radios and head out for a relaxing summer evening with the BARRA crew. See page 1 for more details.

Monday, September 17, 2012 -- Annual report of the Technical Committee to the membership.

Monday, October 15, 2012 -- Annual meeting of BARRA, Inc. for the purpose of hearing reports and electing board members.



**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 7:00 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.



Happy Summer
from the BARRA
Gang!