

The Link

June 2005



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

This Month's Program: SKYWARN Training

This month we will see a visit from our friends at the Buffalo office of the National Weather Service with their SKYWARN training road show. In order to retain SKYWARN training certification you must go through retraining periodically. BARRA makes it easy to do this by bringing the NWS folks to you!

Monday, June 20th is the date. The Weather Service folks always have some great weather stories to share in addition to the SKYWARN information so this is a don't miss event.

BARRA Table at the Rochester Hamfest

BARRA had an informational table at the 2005 Rochester Hamfest on Saturday, June 4th. This now annual outing of the information table provides a means of spreading the word about BARRA to the hams of WNY.

Your editor and Brian, WA2CWF, were the set up and take down crew for the table and members like Dave, W2ZZA, and Sandy, KC2LGK, and Greg, K2GTM, spent some time at the table chatting with the show goers who stopped by.

Many BARRA members wandered by the table throughout the day, including our northern member, David, VE3TIJ/N2ZVK, and his wife who make the annual trek to the hamfest. It was a great opportunity to see many of our members who can't always make it to the regular meetings.

Save the Date!
Monday, July 18th

THE ANNUAL BARRA MOBILE CLINIC & PICNIC

at the Cole Road repeater site

Map and directions in next month's
Link newsletter

Bring a friend

It's Almost Time For



The weekend of June 25-26 will see the 2005 showing of the BARRA Field Day station at our Cole Road repeater site. Co-chairs Dave Halik, W2ZZA (ex-KC2JUF), and Greg Miller, K2GTM, are putting together the pieces for the club's entry in this famous summer ham radio event.

Last year was the first time that BARRA had an official station entered in Field Day in lo these many years. The club made a good showing for so long an absence, so good that it has encouraged another go at it.

Everyone is welcome to participate in Field Day. The gang will need help setting up Saturday morning before the contest starts and then will need help operating throughout the remainder of Saturday and through the night into Sunday. HF and VHF/UHF stations are planned so operators for all modes and skill levels will be needed. Also, help will be needed to tear down the station Sunday afternoon after the completion of the contest. Please plan on dropping by for whatever time you can spare that weekend to lend a hand setting up, on the air or whatever.

If you can provide something that will help the cause that weekend -- anything from equipment to camping gear -- please contact either Dave, W2ZZA, at dave.halik@verizon.net or by phone at 825-4417, or Greg, K2GTM, at k2gtm@arrl.net or by phone at 565-1807. Warm up those bugs and mikes and come on out!

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

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
K2ILH	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.).

BARRA Earns High Marks at AIM Soccer Tournament

In a first-ever effort in providing communications for the annual AIM Soccer Tournament, BARRA has come away with high praise from tournament officials. BARRA volunteers passed hundreds of match scores and other traffic over the weekend which helped the tournament to function more efficiently.

BARRA members Sandy Halik, KC2LGK, Bruce Barrows, WA2HVE, Greg Miller, K2GTM, Nelson Oldfield, WA2ZSJ, Bill Pike, K2ILH, Ed Swan, W2EAS, Jim Collins, KA2IWK, Bill Brown, KB2TOY, Stan Niesiolowski, KB1XW, and non-member Kevin Retzer, K9KVN helped out your editor in tying together four of five field sites over the course of the Memorial Day weekend. The volunteers helped to pull off BARRA's involvement in this event. As it was, we were a bit short on help and one of the field venues was left without ham radio coverage. Another field looked bleak for coverage Sunday afternoon but then WA2ZSJ offered to staff it for a few hours after his shift at another site. Again, this couldn't have happened without the help of the membership.

The weekend's weather proved to be less than optimal with lower than normal temperatures and bouts of wind and rain. Sunday afternoon proved to be the most interesting as some thunder storm cells moved through the area resulting in two fields temporarily suspending play due to lightning. With the BARRA people on site the news about the suspended play was almost instantly relayed to the tournament people so they could keep up with the status of each field.

Throughout the weekend the tournament folks were impressed with the speed and efficiency with which the event traffic was handled -- something we take for granted. The tournament previous to this year relied on cell phones for their traffic handling needs but found that method to be unreliable at best as volunteers would change shifts and forget to hand off cell phones to the next crew or forget to charge the phones and so on.

All of the BARRA volunteers speak well of a fun event to help a good cause. The AIM tournament attracted 170 teams from all over the northeast and into Canada, resulting in over 1,300 hotel rooms being sold that weekend here in WNY.

It is a good possibility that BARRA will be asked next year to repeat our participation, so start thinking now about booking some time Memorial Day weekend 2006 for the AIM tournament. You won't be sorry that you did.

Recruit a member!

Use the membership application on Page 5 to invite a ham radio friend to join BARRA!



REPEATER UPDATE - 146.73

(PL 107.2)

Bill Pike, K2ILH

For some time Ed Swan, W2EAS, and I have been maintaining the 146.73 repeater. It is located in the City of Niagara Falls, on the roof of an eight story hotel through the generosity of the hotel management. This location is reasonably close to our homes and we have made a number of visits during the last two years for repairs and updates. With the passing of K2DSN last year we were faced with the task of retiring that call, which is embedded in the micro controller developed by him and W2EUP. We did not have the source code or a description of the controller operation so I decided to fabricate a drop in replacement based on a popular repeater controller board. The new controller is now in operation. The only difference the user should notice is the automatic announcements.

The first step was selection of the exact controller model to be used. Even the simplest model has more features than the old controller and is programmable using DTMF codes. Use of these codes can be a source of problems so I won't tempt anyone by publishing any of them or the name of the manufacturer here. There are no user functions provided beyond the standard duplex repeater operation with which the repeater was previously equipped.

The controller selected has voice and CW announcement capability. The voice reproduction is quite good. Initially, I used my own voice and found that other stations would recognize it and call me when the repeater identified. I soon changed it to a voice not often heard on the air. The voice capability also includes a record/playback function which could be useful except that it uses the same memory as the announcement function and overwrites the announcements. After reloading the announcements several times, I decided to use the record/playback sparingly.

The controller was available as a short kit (but not a full kit) so there was some time spent ordering parts, building it up, and bench testing. After several months on the bench, including some time when I was in Florida, no irregularities were found. The special interface required for a drop in replacement and the controller board functioned as specified. It probably didn't save much by going the short kit route and if I had not undertaken it as an interesting project it would have been preferable to buy the controller board assembled and tested.

The repeater still has some peculiarities that may become clearer with the new controller. The differing announcements provide new clues. For instance, occasionally the repeater has been known to turn off for a short time. It had been assumed that this was a time out. Time outs did happen because there was no courtesy beep to help the user. Now there is a beep. There is also a time out message announcement, so if the time out message doesn't play, it isn't a time out. Also there were occasional transmissions on frequency without the beep from the controller. If this is the repeater, it is not being keyed by the controller.

The new controller interface also provides override of the standard input by the control link input. This was not available on the old controller and should now provide proper control authority. Control link audio is not repeated on the output. Users may find

the repeater output operating with no apparent input when the control link is in use.

The 73 repeater gives good coverage in northern Erie and in Niagara counties and is used regularly by small groups.

Don't Forget to Check In
With the BARRA



Wednesday Evenings at 8 PM
146.91/224.82/444.00

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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?

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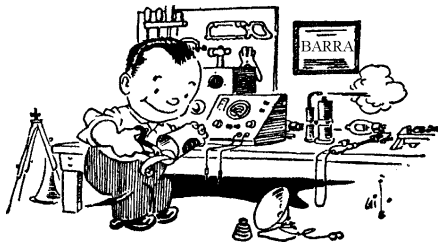
Calendar of Events

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, June 20, 2005 -- SKYWARN training by members of the Buffalo office of the National Weather Service.

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.

SPECIAL TECH COMMITTEE NOTICE:

The Technical Committee will **NOT** meet at the BOCES school during July & August due to summer scheduling differences at the school. Instead, the Tech Committee will meet on the usual nights at the Cole Road site.