



the
B-VARC
BULLETIN



of
BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC.
Ft. Bend and Harris Counties, Texas

Vol. 6, No. 8

August 1983

Editor -- Stu Lawkin WB5IGG, 7401 Heilig, Houston TX 77074

Production -- Vic La Rocca K5KNH Cathy Schneider KA5BNC

CALENDAR

- Next B-VARC -- Regular membership meeting - August 11, 1983
- Board of Directors meeting - August 18, 1983
- Nets -- B-VARC 2M - Ft. Bend ARES, Mondays 8:30PM } Primary freq. 147.60/00
- Public service, Mondays 9PM } Secondary 145.45/144.85
- B-VARC 10M - Ragchew, Wednesdays, 8:30PM, 28.700
- West Houston RACES - Sundays, 8PM, 146.06/76
- Ft. Bend County RACES - Tuesdays, 9PM, 146.16/76
- Houston Area Traffic Net - Mon., Wed., Fri. 6:30PM, 147.60/00
- Hella Hams Fone Patches for Sick Kids - Wednesdays, 7:30PM, 3.955
- Conventions -- Austin Summerfest '83 - August 12-14, 1983, in Austin TX
- ARRL National - Oct. 6-8, 1983 in Houston TX

OUR PRESIDENT SAYS --

It was good to see all those folks who made it to the Club's annual picnic last July 23. A special thanks to Wade and Nancy Eilers for the food, drinks, and super cooking, to Doug and Marie Holley for inviting us to their beautiful home, and to Madison Electronics for the door prizes. For those

--Continued on page 2

Our President Says -- (Cont.)

who could not make it, I hope to have the pictures I took available by the August membership meeting, as well as the video by Vic K5KNH.

I have delivered a letter to the Sharpstown Center which gave them a synopsis of our accomplishments at the Mothers Day event. Donna Gruen was happy to receive the info, as they have a year-end evaluation of Center events. With the letter I inclosed a couple of pictures which will go in a scrapbook they maintain. She said there would be no problem having us back again. Who wants to honcho the Mothers Day event in '84?

73, Steve WA5OEN

FOR OUR UPCOMING REGULAR MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON AUGUST 11 we'll have Henry Freedenberg N5HF, a DXer of some reputation, who will tell how he does it. What with what he'll have to say and an article titled "How to break a DX pileup" appearing further along in this issue, we should be able to be pretty successful in our own DX efforts.

There'll be a fellowship period beginning about 7 PM in the meeting room above the fire station on FM2234, with a call to order about 7:30 PM.

NEW MEMBERS

Y'all welcome the following new members who joined us at our last membership meeting. You can identify them and others who've joined us this year by the red border at the bottom of their name badges. If you haven't already done so, introduce yourself to the wearers of the red-bordered badges and make 'em glad they joined us!



Jim Arnold W5RNK, 1136 Radio Lane, #202, Rosenberg TX 77471, General class ticket, home fone 342-5732, work fone 944-1900.

Tom Cole WB5MXX, 11907 Rampart, Houston TX 77035, General class ticket, home fone 723-0723, work 776-5129.

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New members (Cont.)

Carl Cunert WB8SVR, 16219 Rancho Blanco Dr., Houston TX 77083, Advanced ticket, home fone 530-2052, no work fone.

Three other Cunerts -- Susan (YF), Christopher, and Carla.

* * * * *

ROSTER CHANGES

Tom Casey WA5ACF -- new work fone 772-4988.

Ed Harwell W5WVX -- new work fone 944-1900.

THE START OF THE NEW HAM LICENSE EXAM PROCEDURE

ED Note - The following, reproduced from the W5YI REPORT, briefly describes the new Novice license exam procedure which becomes effective August 31, 1983.

Full details, including the text of the Part 97 amended coverage, have been given to Wade Eilers WN5TEN, Chairman of our Training and Technical Advancement Committee.

* * * * *

FCC ORDERS NEW NOVICE TESTING PLAN

The Commission has eliminated the mail-back procedure in certifying applicants for the Novice Class amateur radio operator license. This action is in response to a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted October 21, 1982, in response to a 1981 petition by Dennis M. Dutton, WB2CSJ, of Nunda, N.Y. Dutton asked that the rules be amended to permit the amateur radio operator who gives the Novice telegraphy (Morse Code) test (Element 1,A) also to grade the written Novice examination (Element 2).

Under the Commission's rules, the Novice Class operator license examination is given by an examiner selected by the applicant. The examiner must be 18 years old or age or over, not related to the applicant and the holder of an Amateur Extra, Advanced or General Class operator license.

Under the previous rules, the examiner first gave the telegraphy examination (Element 1,A) to the applicant. If the applicant passed the five words per minute code test, he/she would then submit a license application (Form 610) to the Commission.

Simultaneously with submission of the application, the examiner had to submit a written request to the Commission for the written examination papers (Element 2). The examination papers, either completed or unopened, had to be returned by the examiner to the Commission within 60 days. Completed written tests were graded by Commission personnel and successful applicants were issued a Novice license.

The FCC said as many as 30,000 Novice tests are mailed each year to volunteer examiners with an approximate 97% pass rate. "The existing procedure is unnecessary and burdensome," the Commission said, "its costs far exceed its benefits. Delays of up to eight weeks occur between receipt of the request for exam papers and issuance of a license or notification of failure to pass the test."

Under the new procedure, the examiner will create individual examinations from Commission-prepared questions, administer and grade them and send the applications of applicants who passed the examinations to the FCC for issuance of the license.

Start of new licensing (Cont.)

The Commission has prepared 200 questions from which examiners will make up their tests. The question lists will be available at all FCC field offices as PR Bulletin 1035A. (This is not to be confused with PR Bulletin 1035... the syllabus for all of the various amateur radio examinations.)

The FCC said that volunteer examiners would be required to select a specified number of questions from various subsections of the Novice syllabus. A total of 20 questions will be administered.

In addition to the prohibition against relatives testing each other, the Commission added a prohibition against employer-employee

and employee-employee relationships among those testing and being tested. The new Novice testing procedure does not become effective until August 31, 1983 to allow adequate time to distribute Novice test copies to FCC Field Offices and to the public. Requests for Novice written examinations will be honored by Gettysburg until August 30, 1983.

Form 610 is in the process of being revised and until it is, the examiner must additionally certify on the Form 610 that the applicant has been examined and has passed the written examination.

HOW TO BREAK A DX PILE-UP

Norm Brooks K6FO

Q: How do you break a DX pile-up?

A: LISTEN. Listen to the DX station. Follow the instructions given. Listen to the stations the DX is answering so you'll know where the DX is listening. Always be in a position to hear everything the DX station says.

This was the unanimous advice given by six prominent DXers at the 1983 International DX Convention at Visalia CA on 26 April.

Convention Program Committee Chairman Jay O'Brien W6GO asked the panel "What is it we can do to get through to you? What is it we should do? What should we not do?"

Other points agreed to by the panel were "send your full call sign" and "send it once." They don't like suffixes of calls only, because they must then waste time in asking for and getting the rest of the call.

When you listen to the stations the DX is answering, you will learn the DX station's operating pattern. Does he listen in one place, or move up or down with each call? In this way, you can be in the right place at the right time. Fred said that on CW he starts from the high side of the pile-up, working down to his own frequency. To work him, you should come in just lower than his last contact. Jim Smith says "I define my pile-up. If I say '2 to 5 up', I listen exactly there, not 10 up."

Only call once, they all said. But that once doesn't have to be immediately after the DX stands by. Fred suggests you count "1-2-3" before calling once. Jim Neiger recommends that you listen for a quiet moment and slip in your call just once. He says there's an advantage in having a short call sign.

How to break a DX pile-up Cont.)

Use proper phonetics. Unusual phonetics may have a meaning for you but they confuse the DX. An extreme example would be "O for Oakland" which could be mean "A for Auckland" to a New Zealand oriented DX.

Erik said he likes to reward people who carefully listen to him. He will throw in a quick change in instructions. When a pile-up is calling him "up 5", he may throw in a "down 2." Those who hear and do a quick QSY can get him in the clear. Al said "I tell exactly where I'm listening. Those who listen to my instructions will get me immediately."

Generally, the DX will answer the loudest station first. It's not necessarily the most powerful station because of varying propagation, but it does not hurt to put a big antenna, Al said.

If you're QRP, don't holler QRP, QRP, QRP. Just give your call sign like everyone does -- just once. The dyed-in-the-wool QRPer doesn't want concessions made because of his low power.

Should you tail-end calls? Jim Neiger said "I encourage tail-ending. Just slip in your call where it won't interfere with the on-going contact." First, listen to see if this DX is answering tail-enders. Jim Smith said he answers tail-enders only after the pile-up has worked itself down.

What do you do when the DX station is being jammed? Al suggested you look around for the frequency will move to. "I know I'm being jammed when I get no response to my calls," he said. "I'll change my transmit frequency, listen around and you'll be the first to hear me."

Iris likes to work phone transceive on her own frequency. She agreed that listening a lot and calling just once with your full call sign are important. "Learn the DX station's rhythm," she suggested. When a pile-up is very heavy, she will come back to partial call signs. But follow her instructions. "When I say 'Sierra Tango' I want only ST to come back." She suggested "If you're not getting through, stop and analyze your technique. Change your phonetics. Shorten your calls. Listen more."

Iris said it is not always the loudest station she comes back to. Some that are not the loudest come through best. Speak slowly. She makes an effort to listen for weak signals, including QRP. Jim Smith does also.

Jim Neiger said that on CW he uses a highly selective filter only 200 Hz wide. If you want to call him on the frequency of the last station, be exactly on that frequency; 200 Hz away and he won't hear you.

In summary, all you need to do to break that pile-up is to (1) listen, (2) send your full call sign, (3) send it once and listen again, (4) try to sense when to send your call once, (5) use standard phonetics, (6) try to learn when the DX is listening (7) try to learn the DX technique and rhythm, and (8) follow the instructions from the DX station.

You have the permission of this prestigious panel to call anyone a "lid" who sends his call more than once without listening for the DX station's response.

DON'T FORGET -- it's \$2.00 for B-VARC if you join or renew your ARRL membership through the Club. And you save \$5.-- if you're over 64 or under 18. Call Lloyd WD5HEH at 498-2088 as to how to go about it.

Raising Your Code Speed

by Robert F. Franklin, K6TP

Many Amateurs who have difficulty with Morse code have simply given up at a certain point and contented themselves with a lower class license and limited privileges as a consequence. This need not be. To understand the code at 20 words-per-minute (wpm) or even well above that speed should be possible for anyone who wants to learn.

Since Morse code remains the most simple and cost-effective means of communicating accurately over long distances and in poor conditions, it still is widely used in Amateur Radio as well as several other services. The code is something that really is worth learning well. There is much to be said for just knuckling down and concentrating on copying codes from broadcasts or tapes, presumably ever faster day-by-day. If this has proved to be incompatible with your nature, be of good cheer. There are some other methods you might try.

It is truly said that, "There is no free lunch." If you reject the "grind" method, you will have to pay in another way — by devoting more time to the learning process. Once you learn the code, it is a much easier, almost painless procedure to raise your code speed.

Familiarity

Have you ever visited a foreign country while having no knowledge of its language? On first overhearing the natives conversing, chances are you got the impression of complete gibberish — an incomprehensible mass of sounds only vaguely resembling human speech. If you stayed in that country several days or a week, you noticed certainly that a few of the common words and phrases of the foreign language began to take on some sort of meaning. You might have found yourself understanding words such as yes, no, please and thank you, even if you didn't have your Jim Dandy Bi-lingual Pocket Dictionary at hand all the time. In other words, the barrier of incomprehension between you and the foreign language began to show some cracks!

Psychologists tell us that this barrier is, in a way, a deep-seated fear of the unknown. With increased familiarity, as some of the unknown becomes known, this fear rapidly diminishes and the barrier lowers.

This "incomprehension barrier" tends to impede your progress in raising your code speed, too, so our first step is to defeat it by increasing our familiarity with code. This involves simply hearing a quantity of Morse code without concentrating or consciously listening to it. The code should be heard at a speed of several wpm, even 50%, higher than your present top speed. Your listening periods should be at least half-an-hour each day over the course of several weeks while you gradually raise the code speed to keep it well above that which you can fully comprehend.

Seem like a lot to ask? Well remember, since you are **not** concentrating on the code, you can do any number of other things that don't require auditory concentration. Clearly, interference from TV sound, broadcast radio, the stereo and any but the most

sporadic, desultory conversation is a no-no. Before long you'll find yourself recognizing an "a" here, a "to," "and" or "for" there at much higher speed with no conscious effort. You are persistently and surely breaking down the "incomprehension barrier" with a minimum of effort.

Obviously, some sort of tape recorder is required for this process. Either reel-to-reel or cassette will do. The latter can be found in qualities good enough for this purpose at under \$30. Record code from W1AW or from any of the several commercial stations sending press copy. There are several code-teaching tape series available commercially, too.

Varying Speeds

"How can I gradually increase the speed of what I hear if what I recorded was just one speed?" Good question! You can raise the linear tape speed of a magnetic recorder by increasing the diameter of the drive capstan — that little shaft that has the tape held against it by a spring-loaded, rubber-tired roller. On a reel-to-reel type, this is most easily done by carefully adding several layers of adhesive cellophane tape to the capstan periphery.

Cassette recorder drive capstans are usually smaller in diameter and can most easily be enlarged by slipping a short bit of insulation over them. Insulation cut from AWG #14 wire used in house wiring, for example, can usually double the linear tape speed.

Most cassette units also employ an adjustable governor circuit which may be controlled by screwdriver adjustment of a small "trimpot" usually found on the circuit board adjacent to the drive motor. For frequent speed changes in this fashion, consider disconnecting the leads from this pot and extending them to a similarly valued pot outside the recorder case. The trimpots are normally set near their minimum so that the other extreme position will nearly double the recorder motor speed. Should the material you record be too fast for your purpose, record it at the higher speed and play it back more slowly. If the opposite is true, reverse the process, but remember that the audio pitch will vary with speed as well, so record at an appropriate pitch.

The Triad Tactic

An effective means of learning code from scratch is to use a voice-code-voice triad. For example, hearing a voiced "A" immediately followed by the code tones "didah" with the voiced "A" repeated enables any listener to associate "A" with "didah" and vice-versa. This takes no more concentration than learning the words of a popular song.

Since you already know the code at some speed, you are beyond this stage, but we can use the same method to raise the speed. In place of individual letters or figures in the triad, make up your own recordings using short words — by, to, for, and, of, now, when, then, why, so, if — first voiced, then promptly sent in code, then immediately voiced again. It may help to have a friend do either the voicing or the keying. Try to send each letter at 15 wpm or faster, even if you have to space the letters out to aid understanding.

Raising your code speed (Cont.)

Raising Your Code Speed *continued*

After you find a few short words easily recognizable as such, not as separate letters, try the same triad tactic with familiar number groups — your age, your home address figures, your social-security number or your phone number in groups of no more than four figures.

You should soon find that you can identify small, common words and familiar number groups quite readily, even at speeds that are nearly double your earlier top speed. Such recognition will come faster to some than to others, but often so quickly that you'll find it amazing. Pay a bit of attention; that is, listen instead of just hearing. Your subconscious mind, however, still should be doing the lion's share of the work by allowing the higher-speed code to sink in. You should devote several hours a week to this phase, interspersed with periods of "just hearing" higher-speed, unknown text.

The Taped Text Tactic

Now you are beginning to use your subconscious mind like a Random Access Memory IC. Let's take the next step. Choose any simple text of 50 to 200 words that you already know by heart: the words to a song, the Pledge of Allegiance, a speech you memorized or something of the sort. Pick one to start with that includes many of the short words you learned at higher speed with the triad tactic. Set your recorder at a lower speed and, with your code oscillator, carefully record the text in code. Make your code as good as you can and don't sacrifice good spacing for speed; the recorder can speed it up.

Switch to the higher playback speed about 50% above your present top speed of understanding. After all, you know the text well to begin with, and all you need is to be able to catch a few words in a row to find your place in it and follow the code from there. Continue to raise the speed in successive tries.

Please note that for the first time in this process, I am asking you to listen rather carefully instead of just passively hearing what comes out of your tape machine. You should not be concerned with any other activity. Concentrate on the recording. It may be somewhat fatiguing, and fatigue hampers the learning process. Try doing it for shorter but more frequent periods, perhaps several times a day.

By now, you should have a good idea which of these tricks works best for you. Use the best one more often than the others, but omit none of them in the process. Remember, this is bound to take longer than the "concentrating grind," so don't be impatient. Keep at it until you find yourself understanding fresh texts off the air the first time around and at a much higher speed than you attained previously.

Sooner or later, you will want to get what you hear down on paper. If you already type well, that is a big help. If not, here's a tip: Learn and practice using a series of common abbreviations, such as the old telegrapher's Phillips Code or speedwriting. You will find a pretty extensive list of these among the beginning pages of the familiar *Radio Amateur Callbook*. Become familiar with them, practice them and watch your copy speed magically double! Good luck!

NCS SCHEDULES FOR AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

2M Public	--	8/1 N5FAB	8/8 ND5F	8/15 WB5RDK	8/22 KA5NYI	8/29 N5FAB
<u>Service</u>		9/5 ND5F	9/12 WB5RDK	9/19 KA5NYI	9/26 N5FAB	
10M Rag	--	8/3 KA5GYG	8/10 WB5IGG	8/17 K5EST	8/24 N5HF	8/31 KA5GYG
<u>Chew</u>		9/7 WB5IGG	9/14 K5EST	9/21 N5HF	9/28 KA5GYG	

MADISON ELECTRONICS SUPPLY

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TO ALL HAMS---

We carry in stock or can order for you any item you want from any major manufacturer of ham gear, including all line accessories and Kenwood service manuals.

Call me, identify yourself and wants, and I'll quote our HOT SPECIAL prices available to you.

73, Don Busick, K5AAD

B-VARC PUBLIC SERVICE HONOR ROLL

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Dick Hagerman WB5SRN - A,B,C,E,G,I,K,L,M | Vic LaRocca K5KNH - D,I |
| Harold Parker ND5F - A,B,D,F,G,I,J,L,M | Lloyd Phelps WD5HEH - D,G |
| Stu Lamkin WB5IGG - A,D,G,I,L,M | Ed Truitt KD5JC - A,G |
| Mike Armatta N5APC - A,B,H,J | Ken Andrews KC5GR - I |
| Larry Levy WD5DRB - D,G,I,J | Carter Beghtol KD5XX - M |
| Mark McGrath KA5NYI -D,I,L,M | Ethel Bolyard - I |
| Ron Bolyard KA5GYG - G,I,J | Irene Gordon N5AYX - H |
| Barry Brubaker N5FAB - D,I,J | Bob Grady N5DQR - I |
| Steve Gottlieb WA5OEN - D,G,I | Jon Hill N5BHQ - I |
| Ed Harwell W5WVX - G, I,J | Doug Holley N5EUC - J |
| Jay Maynard K5ZC - A,C,F | Joanne Morphew K5HOY - I |
| Ken McAninch KA5DKS - D, I,L | Ray Morphew K5EST - I |
| Bob Spradling W5UBD - C, I,L | Gary Richardson N5ANF - J |
| Tom Casey WA5ACF - I,J | Cathy Schneider KA5BNC - G |
| Henry Freedenberg N5HF - I,L | Mark Schneider WB5RDK - G |
| Hy Gordon NC5A - C,H | Steve Schuster WA5RBD - I |
| Louis House KD5GM - I,J | Todd Stolzberg K1OD - I |

EVENTS

- | | |
|--|--|
| A. Houston Marathon, 1/16 | H. Houston March of Dimes Walk
America, 4/24 |
| B. Bayou City Fun Run, 3/19 | I. Sharpstown Center Mothers Day
Messages, 4/30 |
| C. Houston Festival, 3/19-20, 26-27 | J. Ft. Bend ARES Callup, 5/15 |
| D. Bellaire Fun Run, 3/27 | K. Guadalupe Canoe Race, 6/3 |
| E. Reeking Regatta, 4/9 | L. Fleet Feet Fun Run, 4/30 |
| F. Galveston Rainbow Festival, 4/15/16 | M. Inside Runners Fun Run, 7/16 |
| G. Ft. Bend March of Dimes Superwalk, 4/24 | |

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If any member participated in any of the events listed above but is not listed as participant, or in a similar activity which could be classified as a civic event, (which would include disaster emergency communications) please inform Harold Parker ND5F, B-VARC Special Service Club Coordinator,

B - S - S MART

Use this section to list any ham-related gear you'd like to buy, sell, or swap. Give us a listing of your items by the 3rd Thursday of the month for inclusion in the next issue of the BULLETIN. If you wish, we'll run it in more than one issue.

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- FOR SALE -- 1. ICOM IC-701 HF transceiver, 160-10M, dual VFOs, power supply, speaker, desk mic, EX-1 extension terminal, and all manuals. Will accept receiver preamp.
2. Homebrew 10A. power supply.

Stu Lamkin WB5IGG
777-3345

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

A smile costs nothing but creates much.

It enriches those who receive without impoverishing those who give.

It happens in a flash and the memory of it sometimes lasts forever.

None are so rich that they cannot get along without it and none are so poor but are richer for its benefits.

It creates happiness in a home, fosters goodwill in a business, and is the countersign to friends.

It is rest to the weary, daylight to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and nature's best antidote to the troubled.

Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen; yet it is of no earthly good to anybody until it is given away.

And if it ever happens that some of our brethern should be too tired to give you a smile, may we ask you to leave one of yours?

For nobody needs a smile so much as one who has none left to give.

--ARNS Bulletin

B-VARC BULLETIN
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

