

B-VARC BULLETIN

The Monthly Publication of the
BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
Serving Fort Bend and Harris Counties

Editor-in-Chief: Irv Smith, KB5EXM 437-4803
Production Manager: Roland Torres, KB5EQH 933-4143

About the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club . . .

Organized in 1977, the club has been growing steadily. It is a gathering place for HAM radio operators in Fort Bend and Southwest Harris Counties, and surrounding communities. It is a general-purpose type of HAM club offering a variety of activities open to all interested persons. Membership is open, not only to licensed HAM operators, but also to anyone interested in the hobby. In addition to regularly-scheduled membership meetings, the club each year conducts classes leading to amateur radio licenses, and each month sponsors a volunteer-examiner team which offers examinations in all levels of HAM licenses.

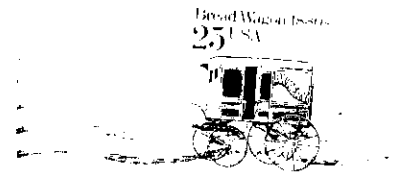
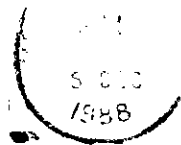
For information about the club and any of its activities, please call Stu Lamkin, WB5IGG, (713) 777-3345.

Volume: 11 Issue: 11

December 1988

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

From: Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
P.O. Box 1630
Missouri City, TX 77459
Telephone: (713) 777-3345



B-VARC Meeting Schedule

Thursday, December 8	General Meeting
7:30 pm	Missouri City Fire Station
	Informal gathering before meeting at Hitching Rail BBQ (formerly Vaso's)
Thursday, January 5	Board Meeting
7:30 pm	Missouri City Fire Station
Thursday, January 12	Annual Banquet
7:30 pm	Regal Ranch (Stafford)

Allen Mattis N5AFV
5314 Wigton
Houston, Tx 77096

THE LAME DUCK REPORT

by: Dave Dyer (AA5GA)

Because this is my last month as President of B-VARC, I feel compelled to review the good times past and express dreams for the future.

THE BOARD

The first challenge of the new year was to fill out the board. Luckily, some pretty capable members "volunteered" a lot of their free time to take on the responsibilities of the open board positions.

One key ingredient to a successful organization is the management team. I am proud to have been part of a team with such an amazing record.

But, with Jack (WN5A), Karl (N5QLQ), and Irv (KB5EXM) as our "at-large" directors, we simply could not lose.

Our recording secretary, Rick (KA5YSL) was a big help. He started a monthly newsletter article to tell us the highlights from our previous monthly meeting.

As corresponding secretary, Herb (N5GZW), took on many extra tasks to help make our meetings a success.

On the subject of extra tasks, Jack (WN5A) maintains our club roster. By the time Jack took over this job, the roster was anything but current. Jack put a lot of time and effort to make our roster current and accurate. Thanks Jack, this has been a big help to us all.

Another member doing double-duty is Irv (KB5EXM). He serves as chairman of our newsletter committee. This group has really improved the quality of our newsletter over the past year.

Many, many heartfelt thanks to the advertisers that have shown support for B-VARC with their ads.

As treasurer, Brenson (KF5VZ) brought back the monthly financial reports that George (ND5E) had done so well when he was our treasurer. In addition, Brenson started a budget forecast and restored the tradition of publishing a monthly financial report.

Brenson's budget forecasts were a key tool that your board used in making financial decisions. It has been very exciting to see the board emerge from a deficit position to start operating in the black.

Suzanne (KB5BAY) has got to be one of the most dynamic, hard working Vice-Presidents in the history of the club. I cannot even begin to count all the contributions she has made.

One of the most important was the creation of a "Book of Remembrance" - A yearbook that club members can look back on in nostalgia or disbelief.

B-VARC BRAG

Financially, the club went from red ink to black ink. We sponsored a monthly VE exam, giving non-hams the opportunity to become hams and many hams a chance to upgrade. Thank-you, Harold (ND5F) for the untold hours of effort you expended to make it possible.

We sponsored two novice classes. The first class, taught by Lee (KB5EST) and Lee (KA5WJB), helped 13 people become hams.

The second class is in session under the guidance of Lee (KA5WJB) and Glen (WB4LZG). This is the first time B-VARC charged tuition for a novice class. The \$20.00 tuition included the cost of the ARRL "Tune in the World with Ham Radio" book and code tape.

We sponsored a General class. Three hardy souls signed up for this class and paid their tuition. So far, one has passed and two are still trying.

The B-VARC Mother's Day event was an incredible success. More than 15 members came to the party. The bands were wide open and people stopped by and showed interest in Amateur Radio. Thanks again to Dave (WJ5B) for his outstanding work in handling all the Mother's Day traffic. And to Steve (WA5OEN), for chairing the committee.

The MS-150 bike ride was another banner event for B-VARC. OK, so I did poop out at the 50-mile mark. It was still fun. Many thanks to Ray (WA5F) for organizing B-VARC members (as well as members of other ham clubs) for this event.

Field Day: WOW! What an event. More than 60 members there. More than 25% of the club's licensed hams stay all night! The food, unbeatable. The location, outstanding.

Special thank-yous to Mike (N5KRU) and Cathy (N5LKU) for hosting the event at their farm. The committee, Randy (AK5G) and Mike (N5KRU) and Herb (N5GZW), started planning this event THREE MONTHS in advance. Suzanne (KB5BAY) headed up the picnic that coincided with field day.

B-VARC members are supporting a series of warm-up races for the Houston Marathon. This year, we are having record numbers of members volunteering to help with the "athons". Thanks to Allen (N5AFV), A.J. (WB5YLB), and Ray (WA5F) for all their help in organizing volunteers for these events.

THE LAME DUCK REPORT (continued)

And who said "there ain't no free lunch"? Obviously, they were not at any of our recent meetings. It all started innocently enough: Vic (N5NAS) volunteered to make beans and rice. Karla (N5LGS) made cornbread. Bill (N5KXU) took care of the coffee pot. Harold (N5DF) brought dessert. And the list of contributors could go on and on.

I don't know who to blame for the Buffalo Chicken wings at the next meeting. But, I want to thank Herb (N5GZW) for the celery sticks and Bill (N5KXU) for the coffee and soda pop. And the list of contributors could go on and on.

Just when we thought "Nothing can top this!", along comes Bill (N5MPN) with his world-infamous SCHLUM... SLUMGOLLI... STEW. Boy, was it super outstanding. Bill, you really made election night a pleasure. And the list of other contributors could go on and on.

Sadly, this year we bid a fond farewell to the West Side Social meetings. And with our best Texas Hospitality, we say "HOWDY" to our new neighbor, the Amateur Radio Club forming in the Bear Creek area. These are outstanding hams and we wish them the best of everything. Special thanks to Bill (KG5CB) and Joe (AA5BD) for all their help with the West Side Social.

One last brag, Gerry (N5APW) has made the B-VARC public service net one of the most popular nets in the Houston Metro Area. I remember just a short time ago, when 10 check-ins was super. Now, the number of check-ins often tops 30.

IF WISHES WERE FISHES...

B-VARC should get more involved in emergency preparedness. I'm not talking about RACES, ARES, or OEM work. These are emergency preparedness for disasters.

I am talking about the times when an amateur radio operator is the first to arrive at the scene (car wreck, heart attack, drowning, or other emergency situation). We use our radios to put in a call for help. Great! The paramedics are on their way, now what?

Every B-VARC member should have current CPR training. We should all have current first-aid technician training. Calling for help is not enough - we must be prepared to provide it.

ANOTHER WISH

Bill (KG5CB) did some experimenting with linking the RACES (442.5 MHz) repeater with the MERA (145.47) one. Everybody seemed to have a lot of fun with this

link, especially on the B-VARC public service net. Thanks for doing it Bill.

It sure would be nice if we could fund a link for these two machines (assuming, of course, that operators of both repeaters agreed). Another fun link would be one to 10-meters.

Although all members of the MERA board are B-VARC members, and even though many B-VARC members contribute funds to support repeaters, B-VARC, as a club, has not supported a repeater in the past. I believe it is time to review the issues and, hopefully, assume a more active role in repeater support.

THE THIRD WISH

Why not sponsor some special events and other activities to make the general public more aware of amateur radio and its contributions to the community.

Traditionally, the only time people think of hams is when they have problems with their TV's, radio's, or stereos. Amateur radio is seldom thought of in any other context by the general public. In truth, amateurs are usually not the cause of the problem. But, we are an easy target (a simple excuse that everyone accepts).

We have brought this problem upon ourselves by our complacency. Because we do nothing to improve our image, we constantly find ourselves on the defense.

We want people to know the truth about amateur radio. We want them to know all the good we do for the community. We have to take the initiative, planning and executing programs, activities, and events to improve our image. If we don't, we know our image will continue to degrade.

MY THREE WISHES ARE UP...

Well, there it is. My look back, my hopes for the future, and my last column as B-VARC President. But there are still two more things to note.

First, my heartfelt thanks to Stu Lamkin (WB5IGG) for all his hard work, support, and encouragement. Thanks to Alan (KASTJS) for getting me "hooked" on amateur radio. And, most of all, Thanks to my loving wife Karla (N5LGS), my daughter Deborah (KB5GUY), and my other daughter Alicia (not yet), for all the hours, late nights, early mornings, and other sacrifices I know they made to make this year a success for B-VARC.

Second, this year we elected a great management team to guide the club in 1989. I want to say congratulations guys... and GOOD LUCK.

-- Dave Dyer (AA5GA)

E-VARC ORDER OF THE KEY

by: Harold, ND5F

In November of each year, it is time for E-VARC members to make their nominations of candidates for the "E-VARC ORDER OF THE KEY AWARD". Candidates should be only those who have made significant personal contribution to E-VARC during the year or over an extended period of time.

This prestigious award is presented only to E-VARC members by the general membership. Each candidate must receive unanimous approval of the Board of Directors. This distinction can only be earned through voluntary service for the advancement of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club.

The following standards are diligently applied to all prospective recipients as the means of preserving the meaning and importance of this very special award.

1. The extra special effort or extraordinary performance by a member after volunteering for a special task or project. Such a significant service to the Club could take place over a relatively short period and represent loyalty or effort that is normally "beyond the call of duty".

2. The performance of sustained outstanding and dedicated voluntary service to E-VARC over an extended period of time.

Nominations for a club member to be a candidate for the Order Of The Key Award must be made in writing, addressed to the E-VARC Board of Directors and be in the hands of any member of the Board not later than one week prior to the December meeting of the Board. The nominations should state the reasons why the nominee has earned the Award. The President polls each of the Board Members personally and only he knows the results. The awards, if any, will be presented at the Club's annual banquet in January.

This Award is unique to E-VARC. It was conceived by a Club member and first bestowed on Bob Spradling, WSUED/SK, for his dedicated service to E-VARC.

The Club's Annual Foster includes the impressive list of recipients of the "E-VARC ORDER OF THE KEY". Hopefully, it will inspire YOU to join the ranks of those who have done the most to make the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club what it is today.

Order of the Key

Bob Spradling, WJUBD	1980
Stu Lamkin, WBSIGG	1981
Ron Bolyard, KASGYO	1982
Wade Eilers, WNSTEN	1983
Steve Gottlieb, WASOEN	1983
Allen Haase, KASRXX	1984
Harold Parker, ND5F	1984
Dick Hagerman, WBSSRN	1985
Vance Peterson, NSFLQ	1985
Ray Dillard, WASTF	1986
George Jolly, ND5E	1987

Jack Van Demark (WN5A) Elected President Will Succeed Dave Dyer (AA5GA)

Officers for 1989 elected at the November General Meeting:

President:	Jack Van Demark (WN5A)
Vice President:	Bill Dessens (NSKXU)
Recording Secretary:	Robert Ricketts (NSJKD)
Corresponding Secretary:	Larry Overacker (KB5AKS)
Treasurer:	Brenson Abbott (KF5VZ)

There were no other nominations for these offices.

Four members were nominated for the sole Director's position:

George Jolly (ND5E)
Greg Lefebvre (KSLTW)
Allen Mattis (NSAFV)
Rick Meyer (KASYSL)

Allen Mattis was elected from this set of excellent candidates. Carl Albrecht (KA5QLQ) and Jack Van Demark (WN5A) remain on the Board as, respectively, 2-Year and 1-Year Directors. Jack's position will become vacant when he takes office in January, and that vacancy will be filled by the new Board.

Thanks to all who allowed their names to be put in nomination, and congratulations to all the new officers-elect!

DAFFYNITIONS

10 ¹² microphones	= 1 megaphone
10 ⁶ bicycles	= 2 megacycles
500 millinaries	= 1 seminary
2,000 mockingbirds	= Two Kilomock- ingbirds
10 cards	= 1 deckacards
1/2 lavatory	= 1 demijohn
10 ⁻⁶ fish	= 1 microfiche
453.6 graham crackers	= 1 pound cake
1 unit of suspense in	
a mystery novel	= 1 whod unit
10 ¹² pins	= 1 terrapin
10 ⁻¹² boulevard	= 1 Pico Boulevard (L.A.)
10 ²¹ piccolos	= 1 gigolo
10 rations	= 1 decoration
100 rations	= 1 C-ration
10 millipedes	= 1 centipede
3-1/3 tridents	= 1 decadent
5 holocausts	= 1 Pentacost
10 monologues	= 5 dialogues = 1 Decalogue
2 monograms	= 1 diagram
8 nickels	= 2 paradigms
2 snake eyes	= 1 paradise
2 wharves	= 1 paradox
1 milli-Helen (of Troy)	= amount of face that can launch one ship

...from "The Bent of Tau Beta Pi"

NOTES FROM THE Y.P.

The November Board Meeting was held on 11/3/88. The Board attendees were Dave (AA5GA) Dyer, Jack (WN5A) Van Demark, Herb (N5GZW) Nance, Carl (KA5QLQ) Albrecht, Brenson (KF5VZ) Abbott, Irv (KB5EXM) Smith, George (ND5E) Jolly and myself (KB5BAY). General members that attended were Bill (N5KXU) Dessens, Robert (N5JKD) Ricketts and Karla (NSLGS) Dyer.

Our year is winding up, and so is our old-business section of the meeting. We had two items:

KB5BAY moved that the club pay the deposit of \$321 to Regal Ranch, and charge \$12 per person for the annual banquet. KB5EXM seconded and it passed.

Our other item of old business was to send a check to HAMCOM.

Our new business was concentrated on our election night. We decided to have a table to collect money for the banquet, and also to have a membership table. KB5EXM moved that, should controversy arise, the By-Laws provision that the election must be held in November should take precedence over the provision of a quorum being necessary. WN5A seconded, and it passed. (A quorum was present! ... Ed)

Our next board meeting is the first Thursday in December at 7:30 p.m. at the Fire Station. Anyone is welcome; I hope to see you there!

73. Suzanne King (KB5BAY)

ANNUAL BANQUET

This year's banquet will be held at Regal Ranch on Thursday, January 12th. It is on South Main, about a mile west of Murphy Road (see map). If coming down the Southwest Freeway, it is best to exit at Airport Exit and then turn left on Kirkwood (2nd underpass). Turn left into the east-bound lane after crossing the RR tracks; Regal Ranch will be on your right in 1/2 mile.

We will have a "Go-Western" theme, but you don't have to dress up to come. We will have chicken and beef fajitas to eat. There will be unlimited cokes, coffee, beer and wine. The charge is \$12 per person, and reservations may be made through me.

73, Suzanne King (KB5BAY)



P.O. Box 721405 • Houston, Texas 77272-1405 • (713) 772-8925

November 9, 1988

Mr. A.J. Blackwell
Braze Valley Amateur Radio Club
9212 Locust
Bellairre, Texas 77401

Dear A.J.,

On behalf of the Houston Striders, the DARC/LDR committee, and the runners who participated in this year's 20K, I would like to extend our thanks for the superb effort brought forth by your radio communications team. The race would not have achieved the success it did without the help of many volunteers. This especially includes those members of your radio club, most of whom had to get up very early and drive far out of their way on the morning of the race.

I again want to express my thanks to you for soliciting these people and coordinating your team. It was an outstanding effort.

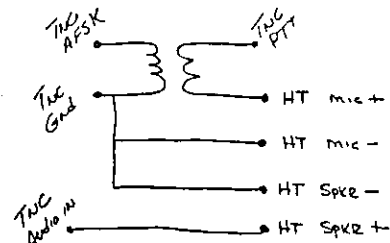
The Striders look forward to working with the Braze Valley Amateur Radio Club again next year.

Yours truly,

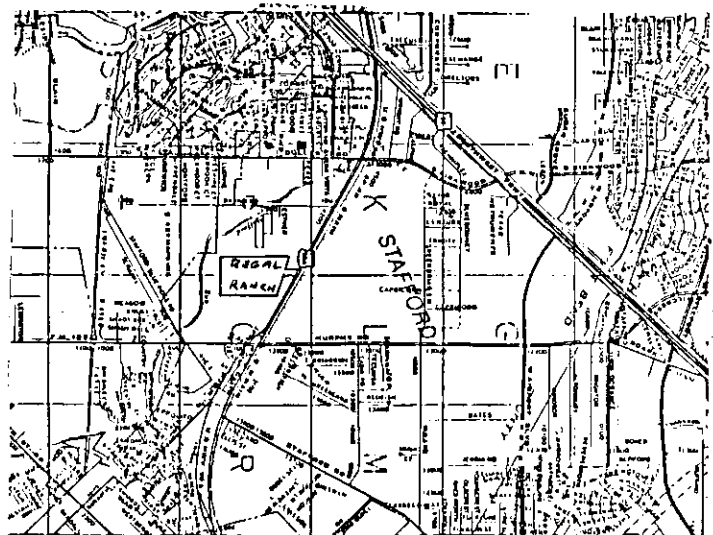
Walter M. Skienar
Race Director

HOOKING UP A TNC TO AN HT

by: Greg, K5LTW



Use a 1:1 600-ohm isolation transformer. If not available, you can use two audio transformers. Hook the secondary windings together and use the primary windings as above.



RESULTS OF THE NOV. 13TH EXAM:

by: Harold Parker, NDSF

B-VARC again sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examinations that were held on Sunday morning, November 13, 1988 at the Sheridan Crown Hotel during the Houston Com-Venture 88;

The V.E. Team and Assistants:

- Jack Van Demark, WNSA
- Mark Tyler, K5GG
- Henry Morrison, WSR1Y
- George Jolly, NDSE
- Randy Pollard, AK5G
- Greg Smith, K8SFE
- Cass Germany, YG5IT
- Joe Tarrant, K5DIY
- Dave Dyer, AA5GA
- Jim Fetti, W5YKR
- Mike Scism, W5VM
- Ray Dillard, W5SF
- Stu Lamkin, W5IGG
- Herb Nance, N5GZV
- Harold Parker, NDSF

A total of seventy-seven (77) exams were administered during the morning to thirty-seven (37) applicants. Of those, two are new Novice's and nineteen (19) upgraded their license with a total of forty-six (46) elements passed. The overall "pass rate" for the morning was sixty (60) percent.

Congratulations to all the following who upgraded and passed exams:

- Harvey Adams, N5EJL - Advanced
- Barry Bass, N5LFE - Advanced
- Joseph Bertani - Elements 2 and 3A
- George Carr, W5LKH - Element 1C
- Jack Cumber, W5KFX - Technician
- Bruce Davis, K85FYH - Technician
- Harold DeVaney - Technician
- Susan Edwards - Element 2
- Joseph Falke, K85GYX - Technician
- Tom Freehling - Element 2 and 3A
- Curt Furtado, K88CL - Technician
- Rodney Jones, N5NHO - General
- Norman Kelson - Novice
- Brenda Kosa - Novice
- Norman Knapp - Technician
- Grady Lambert - Technician
- Richard MacDougal, K5SLZ - Element 4B
- Gene Montgomery, K8SLDP - Advanced
- Charles Furchase - Technician
- Cipriano Rodriguez - Technician
- Al Spurgat, N8DA5 - General
- Faul Stelljes - Technician
- William Tompkins, K85FYK - Technician
- Kevin Vinther - Technician
- Henry Voss, W5J5F - Element 4B
- Stacy Ware, K85HOE - Technician
- William Wilson, K85GHI - Technician

Many thanks to all the Team Members and Assistants for the great

RESULTS OF THE NOV. 8TH EXAM:

by: Harold Parker, NDSF

B-VARC again sponsored the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examinations that were held on Tuesday evening, November 8, 1988 at Strake Jesuit in Houston.

The V.E. Team and Assistants:

- Henry Morrison, WSR1Y
- Don Mayhall, N5DM
- Joe Tarrant, K5DIY
- Stu Lamkin, W5IGG
- Ray Dillard, W5SF
- Harold Parker, NDSF

A total of thirteen (13) exams were administered during the evening to ten (10) applicants. Of those, one is a new Novice and three (3) upgraded their license with a total of five (5) elements passed. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was thirty-nine (39) percent.

Congratulations to all the following who upgraded and passed exams:

- James Hernon - Novice
- Thomas Moore - Technician
- Robert Townsend - Technician
- Carolyn Wilson, K85FFO - Advanced

Many thanks to the Team Members and Assistants for all their time and efforts that contribute to the success of the program. My special thanks to Henry, WSR1Y who again has handled the exams in my absence while I attend a Seminar. Everyone at B-VARC again thanks Vincent, W5ETS, at Strake Jesuit for allowing us to use the excellent classroom facilities each month for the exams.

"BISSOTWO" QUIZ

Space this month won't let us print the full answer to what "soxisix" and "bissotwo" mean, so here's another hint: "setteseven" These radio-related terms are part of a larger set. Who knows what they mean?

V.E. SESSIONS IN DECEMBER

by: Stu Lamkin, WBSIGG

Following are Radio Amateur license exam sessions scheduled to be held in this area in December 1988. The listing information is as follows:

- A. Sponsored by
- B. Date & Site location
- C. For details, contact

- 1) A. Brazos Valley ARC
B. December 13 in Houston, TX
C. Stu Lamkin, WBSIGG, 713-777-3345
- 2) A. Golden Triangle Exam. Committee
B. December 3 in Beaumont, TX
C. Sid Phillips, 409-886-2732
- 3) A. Sam Houston AR Klub
B. December 10 in Cleveland, TX
C. Sam Neal, N5AF, 713-222-3274

NET DIRECTORIES

Sunday West Houston RACES
8:00 p.m. 146.06 (-0.6)

Monday Fort Bend ARES
8:00 p.m. 147.30 (+0.6)

Monday B-VARC Public Service
9:00 p.m. 145.47 (-0.6)
and 442.5 (+5 mHz)

Tuesday 10X Houston SHOT
8:00 p.m. 28.488

Tuesday AMSAT
10:00 p.m. 145.45 (-0.6)

Wednesday B-VARC 75m Ragchew
8:30 p.m. 3.960

Wednesday CW Net (25 to 13 wpm)
8:30 p.m. 147.32 (+0.6)

Saturday CW Net (25 to 13 wpm)
8:30 p.m. 147.32 (+0.6)

FUTURE EVENTS

- January 12 B-VARC Banquet
- February 2 B-VARC Board Meeting
- February 9 B-VARC General Meeting

(All with knowledge of Special Events, etc. are urged to send info to the Editor so we can include it in this listing!)

B-VARC BUDGET REPORT

Prepared by: Brenson Abbott (KF5VZ) date: 10-31-88

MONTH	BUDGET	ACTUAL	DIFFERENCE
Apr.			
newsletter	102.00	28.80	73.20
May			
newsletter	102.00	71.35	
p.o. box rent		10.00	
	102.00	81.35	20.65
Jun.			
newsletter	102.00	25.00	
Ham Com seed money	200.00	0.0	
Stu Lamkin (Dec. 1987)	170.00	170.11	
	472.00	195.11	276.89
Jul.			
newsletter	102.00	0.0	
club picnic	0.0	<88.14>	
	102.00	<88.14>	190.14
Aug.			
newsletter	102.00	50.00	
club picnic	100.00	0.0	
	202.00	50.00	152.00
Sept.			
newsletter	102.00	25.00	
insurance	375.00	168.00	
ham festival	100.00	0.0	
	577.00	193.00	384.00
Oct.			
newsletter	102.00		
ham festival		100.00	
Banquet Deposit		321.00	
Novice Class Income		<240.00>	
Novice Class expenses		183.60	
	102.00	364.60	-262.60
Nov.			
newsletter	102.00		
Dec.			
newsletter	102.00		
banquet	1000.00		
	1102.00		

Treasurer's Report as of October 31, 1988
Submitted by Brenson Abbott KF5VZ

Balance as of September 30, 1988	688.83
Receipts:	
Membership Dues	3.00
Dollar Draw & Donation KASQLQ	21.00
Novice Class Tuition	240.00
Total Cash Receipts	264.00
Expenses:	
Royal Ranch Bang. Deposit	321.00
Houston HAM-CONVENTION	100.00
Total Expenses	421.00
Balance as of October 31, 1988	531.83

73, KF5VZ

Amundsen would head a group. Two Russian icebreakers, *Malygin* and *Krassin*, were moving toward them, and the men of the *Italia* felt the ships would push through until they were rescued. Everyone had new faith in the radio.

But then came a wind shift and a storm; the wind blowing them toward the open sea, and the storm blocking radio contact. It was necessary to move to another floe.

For the next few days, communication was poor, but Biagi was told the *City of Milan* would listen for them only at 8:55 P.M. Only fragments of Biagi's transmissions were received. The *City of Milan* each night would report there was nothing new and no change. Instead of listening for Biagi's reply, regular traffic with San Paolo would be resumed.

Nobile was angry. He sent a request the *City of Milan* listen for at least ten minutes after calling. It was three days before the ship's radio operators changed procedures, and

then Nobile wired, "Could not give you our coordinates because you persist in listening only at 8:55 P.M. when reception is very bad. Romagna should send at once minimum supplies. Situation still dangerous." The new location was sent.

A faint sound was heard and smoke from the signal fires went up. Two planes came within miles and turned away from the camp. Biagi radioed that the planes were seen but turned away. The *City of Milan* told them, "Next day at the same hour."

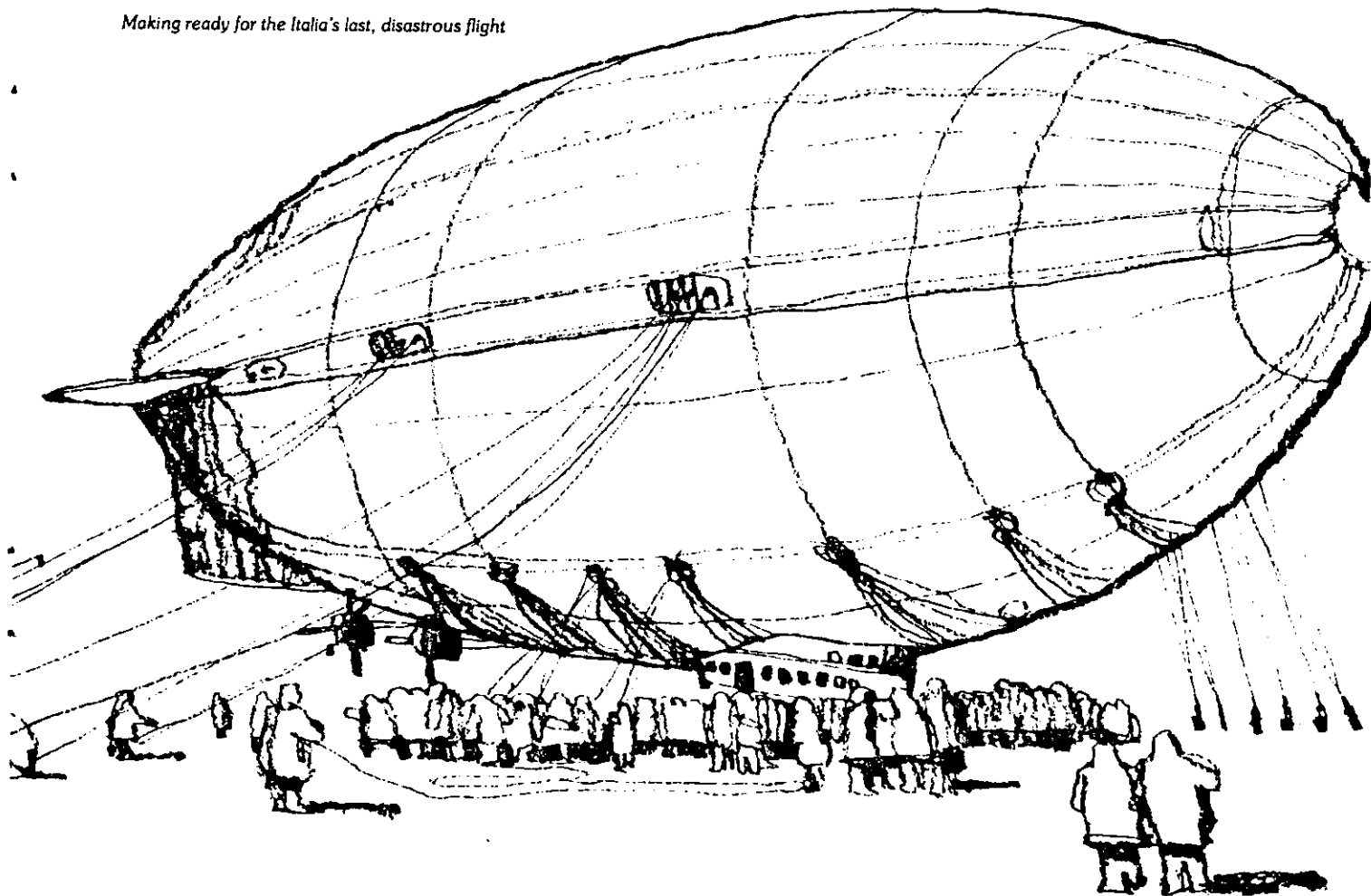
Everyone waited, but there was nothing the next day. On June 19th they heard a plane but it also turned and disappeared. Yet another plane came close, but it also turned without contact.

The 27th day on the ice pack Biagi copied, "A plane carrying a radio" had taken off. On the pack, smoke signals and Very lights were ready, Biagi was at the radio, metal had been shined to reflect light, and all waited. At 7:30 radio contact was made. A

hydroplane appeared and by radio Biagi gave directions. The plane came within 100 yards and Biagi sent "VVV," the signal meaning they were on top of the camp. The plane turned, and suddenly it appeared to be lost and again searching for the men. It was half an hour before Biagi made contact with the plane and guided it back. "KKK" was sent. This was the code to drop the provisions. Packages rained down and the plane wheeled and headed south. Leather shoes, collapsible boats, sleeping bags, rifles, shattered batteries, and provisions. Instead of pemmican and chocolate they had oranges, lemons, marmalade, cocoa, fifty bananas, and thirty freshly broken eggs.

That night the CW painfully asked for better packaged batteries, pemmican, a Primus stove, medicine, snow glasses, and the largest size shoes for one of the men. The next day fourteen drops contained enough provisions for twenty days. There was medicine, a rifle, a carton of ciga-

Making ready for the Italia's last, disastrous flight



rettes, and two huge pairs of shoes.

The *City of Milan* now cut off communications as if there was nothing to worry about. The next evening, two Swedish seaplanes located them by smoke signals. Two bottles of whiskey were dropped in red parachutes. Everyone agreed the Swedes were a practical people.

A message to tell the Swedes of a landing field on the ice did not get through. The *City of Milan* did not answer the continual calls of Biagi. Those at King's Bay did not realize the ice was breaking up from warming weather, presenting a dangerous situation.

On June 23rd the radio went dead just as contact with the *City of Milan* requested they transmit a message to the Swedes about the landing field.

The 31st day on the pack found no word from the *City of Milan*. Two planes suddenly were heard and the smoke signals guided them toward a marked off field. One plane swooped low several times, and then its skis touched the snow and skidded to a stop. There was a wild race to the plane by those who could run. The pilot was Einar Lundborg, and he requested to meet Nobile, and insisted Nobile leave with him as first off the pack. Nobile insisted the injured be first, but Lundborg demanded Nobile be first, "We need your instructions to start looking for the others." Lundborg had definite orders from the leader of the expedition to bring back Nobile. Biagi spoke up and said Nobile should go first because he could get things moving at King's Bay and then they would all be safe. Nobile left, leaving his heavy clothing but taking a picture of his daughter and two radio notebooks.

Once in the air, Nobile was able to see how hard it was to locate the camp. It blended with, and disappeared into, the arctic. Within thirty minutes they were at the advance Swedish camp. The plane returned to the pack. On the second landing it overturned. The Swedes had no other plane equipped with skis.

Nobile was flown to the *City of Milan*. When he looked in a mirror after thirty-two days of caked dirt and filth, he saw a stranger. Talking to Captain Romagna was more important than cleaning up. Why hadn't the SOS been picked up? Nobile was

shocked to learn Romagna assumed they could not transmit so it was a waste of time to listen, and he explained his theory of how Biagi's head had been chopped off. Nobile insisted the *City of Milan* operators listen regularly, and sent signed radiograms to his men to keep them properly informed. Romagna had placed Nobile under virtual arrest, contending he had orders from Rome to prevent Nobile from taking part in any rescue expedition. Romagna refused permission for the Italian hydroplane to use the Swedish base, which was two hundred miles closer to the pack. He sent word to the men on the floe that the Russian ice-cutter *Krassin* would reach them in about two days. Nobile was furious, and sent word of the fact that the cutter was in Virgo Bay and would not arrive for more than a week. The Swedes flew in and took Lundborg, their downed pilot, from the ice.

Tragedy was begetting tragedy. Amundsen was lost; the Russian aviator, Babushkin, failed to return; alpinists Sora and Van Dongen, with dog teams, had not been heard from. All were lost and never located.

The *Krassin* became the only hope, with sudden bad weather. The ship had a damaged helm and broken propeller, but continued east. They found the three men who had set out on foot, and knew they must be near the floe.

After all this time, Biagi became sick and the radio could not be used to its full extent. The *Krassin* broke through the ice pack, and later that evening spotted the overturned plane. The ship's whistle blew and the five remaining men on the floe sent up smoke signals. Their forty-nine days of cold and hunger were at an end. Giuseppe Biagi, radio operator, sent his final message from the ice pack ending with, "Greetings to our beloved General Nobile." And would Biagi go back to the arctic? "With the general, yes," said Biagi.

So Giuseppe Biagi returned to Italy. He had held to the fine thread of hope that his steady CW would be heard from the arctic wilderness. He would not quit, and he was there when many needed him. He is not remembered as a hero, but then, too, not all heroes wear medals.

HRH

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Larkin, Stu	WBSIGG A, S
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Special thanks to Bill Walker Royalton District Manager of Warner Cable, for donating the use of their copier and supplies for printing the newsletter.

It's Morse to the Rescue:

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By RALPH VARTABEDIAN,
Times Staff Writer

In orbit high above Earth, a multibillion-dollar formation of communications satellites stands ready to instantly connect military leaders in Washington with every American warship and military base in the world.

But what if this technological masterpiece should go haywire or be knocked out by an enemy attack? The Pentagon's sophisticated communications net could go silent and leave troops groping for leadership.

Not to worry. The Pentagon has a backup plan. In part using technology that was invented in 1835, the year Mark Twain was born. It's the Morse code, the language of dots and dashes that has survived the assault of higher technology for a century and a half.

Even in an age when the human voice can be synthesized by a machine and lasers can transmit data over glass-fiber cables, Morse telegraphy has held firmly to the place it has staked out. It is used not only by the military but routinely by civilians and commercial enterprises.

Dots and Dashes

Named after its inventor, Samuel F.B. Morse, the code is a series of combinations of short and long tones (dots and dashes) representing letters of the alphabet that can be transmitted manually by a key operator.

A telegrapher combines the dots and dashes to form letters and words. It is a seemingly tedious procedure but skilled operators can transmit and receive faster than most secretaries can type. The fastest Morse transmission ever recorded was 84 words per minute, sent by an operator named T.L. McElroy.

Morse telegraphy may seem like a quaint anachronism—with its brass sounder and key operated by the world's most basic tool, the human finger. In fact, however, it is sometimes vital to worldwide communications.

"When the Mexico City earthquake occurred (in 1985) and all the power went out, guess who was transmitting calls for international help? It was amateur radio operators using Morse telegraphy," said Marcus Stevens, an official at the Federal Communications Commission.

Reliable Standby

Advanced communications satellites can transmit 100 volumes of an encyclopedia in a second, whereas a journeyman Morse operator can send about 50 words per minute. But if sophisticated space systems fail, a portable, battery-powered Morse transmitter would be invaluable.

"We see the Morse code as a dying art, but we refuse to let it die completely," said Maj. Gen. Leo M. Childs, the Army's chief signal officer. "Newer isn't always better. Even though it is old and slow, Morse is still the most reliable in difficult conditions."

Of course, the most difficult condition imaginable would be a nuclear war, in which any survivors could have only Morse telegraphy for long-distance communications. In the event of widespread

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MORSE: Old Code Thrives in High-Tech Age

Continued from Page 1

destruction, the Pentagon has organized 4,500 civilian amateur radio operators across the country who would attempt to operate a national communications system by broadcasting in Morse code.

But Morse code is not just for use in time of war. Every merchant ship bearing the U.S. flag must carry a radio officer who can both transmit and receive Morse code. Under U.S. law, the officer must spend eight hours every day at sea monitoring the radio for Morse distress calls.

Should you ever find yourself adrift at sea in a lifeboat launched from a sinking passenger cruise ship, it will be equipped with a single communications device: a Morse transmitter that automatically signals a distress call and a keyboard in case you happen to know the Morse code.

Perhaps the best-known bit of Morse code is the call for help—SOS, which stands for "Save Our Ship" or "Save Our Souls." In the code, it is ... — — — ... (dot dot dash dash dash, dot dot dot dot).

Taxi passengers in major cities often hear radio dispatchers send a stream of Morse code. Under FCC rules, such private broadcasting operations must periodically identify their station and typically use Morse code to send their call letters.

Industrial Burst

The enduring use of Morse telegraphy is the legacy of a burst of industrialization in 19th-Century America, when railroads and telegraph developed side-by-side.

"The telegraph revolutionized the way people lived," said W.K. Dunbar, president of the Morse Telegraph Club in Normal, Ill. "It created for the first time the ability to transmit news across the country almost instantaneously."

Most of those railroad telegraph lines were used into the mid-20th Century, well after radio, television and computers became commonplace.

Until 1985, the Milwaukee Road had a Morse telegraph line between Milwaukee and La Crosse, Wis., that was used routinely to relay orders to train crews.

The telegrapher in La Crosse would write down on paper an order from Milwaukee and would pass it to a moving train by holding up a loop of string with the message attached. The engineer would lean out of the locomotive and catch the loop in his arm—"on the fly," as railroaders say.

This Milwaukee Road operation was shut down quietly three years ago, when Howard Hangas sent telegraph operator Fred Becker in La Crosse what may have been the last telegraph in American railroading.

"I sent the last message to Fred," recalled Hangas, a dispatcher on the Milwaukee Road, in a recent interview. "I said that after this message, Morse code wouldn't be used any more. At that point, we pulled the power on the Morse lines."

Of course, it was not the end of Morse code, even in railroading. It is still used by railroads in developing nations, including Mexico.

About one month ago, I was on an excursion down in Sonora, and a couple of stations were still using telegraph land lines," said Chard Walker, a retired railroader who is now with the Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris, Calif.

Some old-timers claim that a few branch rail lines in the United States still use the manual telegraph, but that could not be confirmed. "Are you talking about the dots and the dashes?" asked a dispatcher at the Egin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad in Illinois. "We are behind the times, but we aren't that bad."

Serious Users

But the military services do not consider themselves behind the times, and they continue to be the most serious users of Morse telegraphy.

While billion-dollar satellites and sophisticated ground networks are good in theory, such communications systems can break down on the battlefield. In the U.S. invasion of the Caribbean island nation of Grenada in 1983, for example, communications became so tangled that one soldier was forced to make a credit card call to a U.S. military base from a telephone booth on the island.

"As a matter of prudence," Gen. Childs said, the Army keeps a basic Morse capability. "Suppose our satellites were being jammed? The Morse code is the last-ditch method."

Morse code signals can get through because they require much less broadcasting power to transmit than voice messages. In addition, even a distorted Morse signal can be interpreted, whereas a distorted voice transmission is virtually useless.

The Army annually trains about 2,800 men and women in Morse code for a variety of signal jobs in

Please see MORSE, Page 19

MORSE: Dependable Old Code Backs Up High-Tech

Continued from Page 18
Infantry, artillery, intelligence and even Special Forces.

For example, Army commandos who are sent behind enemy lines to organize dissident civilians must be able to communicate clandestinely. They do it with Morse telegraphy that is transmitted in bursts too short to be located by enemy listening posts, Childs said.

The Navy considers Morse code capability of critical importance, owing to atmospheric disturbances that sometimes block radio voice transmissions.

Sunspot Cycle

"During the 11-year cycle of sunspots, you can run into times in certain areas of the globe where you cannot communicate with any of your equipment except with a Morse signal," said Senior Chief Petty Officer Alexander Constantopoulos, a Navy radio operator. "A machine can do only so much. If it doesn't get a quality transmission, you are going to get garbage. But with Morse, no matter how much distortion there is, you can copy that signal. Only human hearing can do that."

In addition to ships, some of the Navy's older airplanes, such as the early P-3 Orions and A-6 attack jets, also carry Morse telegraphy keys in their cockpits.

The Air Force trains hundreds of enlistees each year in Morse code, principally to monitor communications by foreign armed services. The Red Army continues to use the code for its communications, according to a former Soviet radio-man.

Although nobody can forecast what a nuclear war would be like, virtual all worldwide communi-

INTERNATIONAL MORSE CODE

A	••—	N	—••
B	—•••	O	—•—•
C	—•—••	P	—•—••
D	—•—••	Q	—•—••
E	•—•—•	R	•—•—•
F	••—••	S	••—••
G	—•—••	T	—•—••
H	•••••	U	—•—••
I	••—•—	V	••—••
J	•—•—•	W	—•—••
K	—•—••	X	—•—••
L	•—•—•	Y	—•—••
M	—•—••	Z	—•—••
Period	••—••—••		
Comma	—•—••—••		
Interrogation	••—••—••		
Colon	—•—••—••		
Semicolon	—•—••—••		
Hyphen	—•—••—••		
Slash	—•—••—••		
Quotation marks	••—••—••		

cations would be shut down by two different nuclear effects.

An electro-magnetic pulse would create powerful shocks over a wide area to electrical devices and wires, probably destroying most radios, computers and communications gear, according to Kosta Tsipis, a physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The second effect in the aftermath of a detonation would obstruct radio transmissions. "The atmosphere would be saturated with ionized particles such that you will not be able to communicate with voice or data," explained Constantopoulos, the Navy radio operator. "But a Morse transmission will get through. It is very slow,

but it is the most reliable." He added: "He who communicates first, no matter how primitive, will come out on top."

In that case, retired railroad telegraph operators would probably take over the world. Each evening, the amateur radio waves come alive with the Morse transmissions of the retired railroaders, known among themselves as "old heads."

"I get on the air and use the code every night to talk to old railroad men," said Becker, the retired Milwaukee Road telegraph operator who received the railroad's final telegraph message in 1985. "There are lot of telegraphers around. Every night you hear them pecking."

Expertised Morse operators say the code is not so much a clatter of sounds as a language, because operators don't hear dots and dashes.

"You can sit back and hear a conversation," said Dunbar, the president of the Morse Telegraph after," said Burke Stinson, a public relations man for American Telephone & Telegraph Co. "You have to appreciate that the written word carried—and still does carry—far more weight than the spoken word."

Only a third of American homes had a telephone by 1936, and during World War II the Western Union Telegraph Co. had 15,000 messengers to deliver telegrams across the country.

Western Union continued to use the telegraph until the mid-1960s. And it was not until just this year

Club. "You aren't an operator until you hear the words."

There are two Morse codes—the international code and the American railroad code—with some differences in the dot-dash combinations. The American code primarily uses sounders that produce clicks; the dots and dashes are distinguished by the time intervals between clicks. The international code normally uses an audio tone for the dots and dashes, making it easier to distinguish between them.

Far More Welsh

When Morse inaugurated telegraph service in 1844, he wired from Baltimore to Washington the now-famed message: "What hath God wrought?" Ever since then, the demise of Morse code has been predicted regularly. But for more than five decades after the invention of the telephone in 1864, Morse telegrams were the world's dominant form of telecommunications.

"Telegraph was there before the telephone and carried on for years that it quietly dropped the word telegraph from its name and officially become the Western Union Corp.

Although the telegraph has receded from public view, experts say that they cannot envision an end to its use any time soon. "I can carry a very small Morse key in my pocket and transmit around the world," said Stevens, the FCC official. "I don't think you will ever see the Morse code die. It is going to be difficult to find another method that is just as good."

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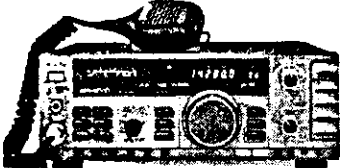
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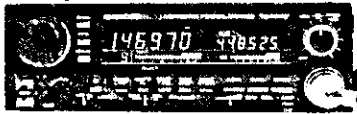
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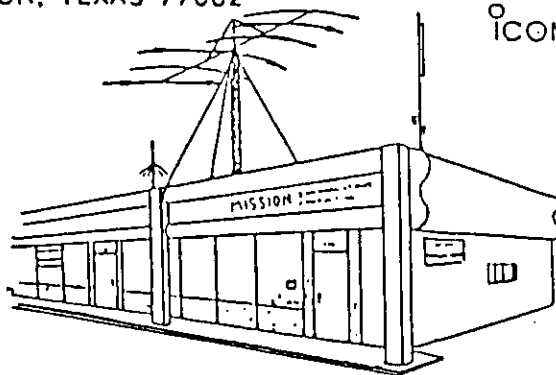
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THE 145.47 (MERA) REPEATER NEEDS \$\$\$

Recently, Dave Hammer (WJ5B) took his service monitor to the MERA (Memorial Emergency Radio Association) repeater to study the intermod problem. Ray Dillard (WASF) helped with the analysis.

Bottom line, the repeater needs two new cavities to replace a bad cavity and increase the rejection of unwanted rf. In addition, the repeater needs a control link.

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