

# THE B-VARC BULLETIN

Volume 21, issue 8  
August 1998

<p><b>Houston Ham Help Line</b> <b>24-Hours</b> <b>281-495-3495</b></p> <p>Get information about local clubs and testing sessions.</p>	<p><b>Membership renewal information:</b></p> <p>Members whose membership has expired or is near expiration will find their membership date highlighted on the mailing label.</p>	 <p><a href="http://www.hal-pc.org/~bvarc">http://www.hal-pc.org/~bvarc</a></p>
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**ARRL Membership - Members are urged to renew their ARRL membership through BVARC, allowing the club to take advantage of reduced insurance rates. Contact Larry, K5LJ, at 281-341-0436 for information**

<p><b>What's in this issue?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Notes from the Prez – P. 2</li> <li>➤ 1998 Meeting Schedule – P. 2</li> <li>➤ Public Service Events - P. 2</li> <li>➤ July Board of Directors Minutes - P. 3</li> <li>➤ Houston Shot News - P. 3</li> <li>➤ BVARC Rag Chew Net - P. 4</li> <li>➤ VE Exam Results - P. 4</li> <li>➤ Scanner Jack's Corner - P. 5</li> <li>➤ Monday Night PSN Check-ins - P. 5</li> <li>➤ Ode to Code - P. 5</li> <li>➤ Mobile VF Operations - P. 5</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Hot Dawg</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Hot Dogs and Drinks for Members - FREE</i></b> <b><i>Come one, come all to the BVARC monthly meeting and join us for Hot Dogs and Soft Drinks. Starting with the June meeting you can visit with your friends and enjoy a hot dog and drink on the club. Serving starts at 6:30pm and goes until 7:30pm. There is no charge for club members. We will have mustard, catsup, onions and pickle relish as dressings for your dogs. Drinks will include Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite and Diet Sprite.</i></b></p>
<p><b>A Special Thanks to the First Colony Church of Christ for the use of their facilities which make this newsletter possible.</b></p> <p><b>Also, Thanks to Claude Sessions, K5HFY, for being in charge of production.</b></p>	<p><b>Board of Directors:</b>          Bruce Paige - KK5DO, <a href="mailto:kk5do@amsat.org">kk5do@amsat.org</a>          John Moore - KK5NU, <a href="mailto:jwm@hal-pc.org">jwm@hal-pc.org</a>          Steven Deaktor - WA3PMT, <a href="mailto:wa3pmt@aol.com">wa3pmt@aol.com</a>          Rex Ritz - KC5EEU          Larry Jacobson - K5LJ, <a href="mailto:k5lj@nftci.com">k5lj@nftci.com</a>          Darrell Kirk - KC5JAR, <a href="mailto:darrellk@swbell.net">darrellk@swbell.net</a>          Gailen Marshall - N4SKR, <a href="mailto:marshall@heart.med.uth.tmc.edu">marshall@heart.med.uth.tmc.edu</a>          Bud King - K5CEK, <a href="mailto:ceking@hal-pc.org">ceking@hal-pc.org</a>          Claude Sessions - K5HFY, <a href="mailto:cesjr@wt.net">cesjr@wt.net</a></p>

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## PRESIDENT'S Article - Bruce, KK5DO

Last month, we had our *Annual Ice Cream Social*. It turned out great. The facility was packed. We had so much ice cream and stuff for the top of it that some of us gained a pound or two. We had a winner for the best home made ice cream. It was Betty, KA0TEN, for her special red cherry ice cream. It earned her a propane soldering iron. Runner up was Dan, W5AOV, for his peanut butter ice cream. Thanks to Rex, KC5EEU, for organizing the Ice Cream Social this year he did a wonderful job.

This month, we will have a speaker, Andy, W5ACM, on **Balloon Launches**. This should be a very interesting meeting as there was a balloon launch on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Find out more about what it takes to launch balloons and how to find it when it comes back down. Also hear about all the neat radio experiments that are carried on board these things.

Here it comes, elections. They are right around the corner. They will take place at the November *Annual Chili Super* (food again). If you have a suggestion for someone that you think will make a good club officer, please contact one of the members of the nomination committee.

The members are:

Gailen Marshall, N4SKR (Chair) email

[marshall@heart.med.uth.tmc.edu](mailto:marshall@heart.med.uth.tmc.edu)

Harold Parker, ND5F email [hparker@hal-pc.org](mailto:hparker@hal-pc.org)

Louis House III, KD5GM email [tsingwu@juno.com](mailto:tsingwu@juno.com)

Who is going to take charge of the *Annual Chili Supper* in November? It is time to get the ball going on this and we need your help. Someone has to organize the event. We need that special person to get a list of those that are going to bring something and then a week before, give them a call on the phone to remind them not to forget. That's it. Simple, easy and you can help make the club a fun place. Won't you please say yes and give me a call.

As we have done for the past 3 months, there will be hot dogs and cold drinks from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM for club members. Come have a dog and chin wag with those you talk to on the repeater.

See you at the meeting.

73...Bruce, KK5DO

## Schedule of BVARC General Meetings for 1998

September 1998

3 - General Meeting

ATV

8 - VE Test

17 - BOD

October 1998

1 - General Meeting

10 - 10 International

N5MT

Mike Davidson

5 - BOD

13 - VE Test

November 1998

10 - VE Test

20 - General Meeting

Chili Supper/Elections

27 - BOD

December 1998

3 - General Meeting

Homebrew Night

[nexus15@flash.net](mailto:nexus15@flash.net)

8 - VE Test

14 - BOD

## Other Dates:

Contests:

June 20 - 21, All Asia DX CW

June 27 - 28, ARRL Field Day

## Public Service Events Needing Ham Volunteers:

- October 10 & 11, 1998 - Alamo Challenge - contact Mike Hardwick
- October 17 & 18, 1998 - Wings Over Houston Air Show - contact Bill Terrell
- October 18, 1998 - 20k Warm-up run - contact Steve Dunkleberger
- November 15, 1998 - 25K Warm-up run - contact Allen Mattis
- December 6, 1998 - 30K Warm-up run - Position open
- January 17, 1999 - The Houston Marathon - contact Carl Hacker

You can always contact me if you are unable to contact the event coordinator.

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Please let me know if you are interested!!!!

Thanks,

Mike Hardwick  
N5VCX

## July Board of Directors Minutes :

Board of Directors Meeting  
The Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club  
August 10, 1998

A quorum of the Board of Directors met at the Sugar Land Community Center on August 10, 1998. The meeting was called to order by the President. The following board members attended: President Bruce Paige - KK5DO, Vice President John Moore - KK5NU, Corresponding Secretary Steven Deaktor - WA3PMT, Recording Secretary Rex Ritz - KC5EEU, Treasurer Larry Jacobson - K5LJ, one year Director Bud King - K5CEK, two year Director Claude Sessions Jr. - K5HFY, and Robert Moore - KK5UO. Absent were Past President Gailen Marshall - N4SKR, and three year Director Darrell Kirk - KC5JAR.

Treasurer Larry Jacobson - K5LJ reported that the current club treasury balance is \$4278.06 prior to the following transactions: \$325 cost for the annual insurance and \$14 for the ice cream social expenses on August 6, plus income of \$50 for advertising in the B-VARC Bulletin and \$220 for the sale of the gin pole. We also have \$112 in the "slush fund" separate account which is the net balance amount left over from field day (we spent only \$65 on field day). Recording Secretary Rex Ritz - KC5EEU presented the July 9 minutes which were approved.

Vice President John Moore - KK5NU presented the program calendar/meeting schedule for the remainder of 1998 and proposed schedule for 1999 as well. President Bruce Paige - KK5DO moved to "suspend" (cancel) the Board of Directors meeting, scheduled for November 27, due to the closeness to

the four day holiday weekend. This motion was passed by the board, with the understanding that any urgent business could be handled by a quorum of the board at the regular November 20 monthly meeting. President Bruce Paige - KK5DO discussed the scheduling of the annual awards banquet for January 1999. It was scheduled for January 7th which is a Thursday and Bruce proposed we move it to Friday, January 8th. This motion was passed by the board. Bruce has contacted "The Old San Francisco Steak House" to host the banquet and they can do the event for about the same price as last year's banquet. We would not have to select an entry until arrival that evening, but we will have to order the side dishes in advance.

It was reported by President Bruce Paige - KK5DO that Rick Hiller - W5RH has requested \$200 in prize money to buy gifts for the "homebrew" contest night on December 3. The board approved spending up to \$200 for that purpose.

Robert Moore - KK5UO made an appeal to the board on behalf of the Boy Scouts of America as a representative from the Optimists Club on the Relationship Committee of the BSA Council for assistance in securing a representative of the amateur radio "community" to serve on the Relationship Committee of the BSA Council. This can be an appointed position. This committee meets quarterly at the BSA office in downtown Houston to promote scouting activities. It was the

consensus of the board that Robert be allowed to make an appeal to our general membership at a regular monthly meeting for an interested representative that could be given such an appointment by B-VARC.

## HOUSTON SHOT NEWS for August 1998 by Al Mattis - N5AFV

As reported last month, Ten Ten International is seeking applicants for the position of Worked All Continents award manager. Mark Murphy, KC4HIT, who has held the position for several

years, has remarried and finds less time for amateur radio in his new life style. Anyone interested in the position should contact Ed Redwine, K5ERJ, by E-mail at K5ERJ@aol.com.

The annual Paper Chasers Gathering in Reno, Nevada will be held this month on August 13-16, 1998 at the Circus-Circus

Start building your entry now for the

## Second annual B-VARC Homebrew Contest

December 3rd B-VARC monthly meeting

### Contest Classes

Homebrew equipment

Antennas

Kits and Modified Equipment

Prizes awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places for each class

Questions to W5RH at rhiller@sysdev.com  
or via the B-VARC reflector

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Casino and Hotel. Ten Ten members usually ask for rooms on the second floor of the Main Tower. A special room rate is available for those attending. Further information may be obtained from Phil Harlos, WB6NYM, by E-mail at wb6nym@softcom.net or by telephone at (916) 725-6800.

Ten Ten International has announced that the 1999 Ten Ten International Convention will be held June 10-13, 1999 at the Garden Plaza Hotel in Oak Ridge, TN. The convention will be hosted by the Springbok Chapter (ZS), and James Whittlesey, KC4RHW, is the convention chairman.

The Houston SHOT chapter is pleased to welcome DL1DSA, DL8OBC and N3MIE as its newest member. The chapter currently has 382 local members, and 1323 non-local members, for a total membership of 1705.

Visit the Houston SHOT chapter home page at <http://www.clarc.org/shot/> when you get on the Internet. The site contains information about the chapter, past editions of the Houston SHOT News, and the Ten Ten DX column written Mike Davidson - N5MT, the SHOT chapter head. The chapter thanks Bruce Paige - KK5DO, for constructing and maintaining the page, and the Clear Lake Amateur Radio Club (CLARC) for providing space on their server for the page.

Paper chasers continue to be active on 28.345 MHz, 28.375 MHz, and 28.425 MHz during band openings. The Fort McHenry (MD), Cornerstone (MD), Electric City (FL) and Peshtigo Fire (WI) chapters are conducting specials for paper chasers to promote activity when the band is open. Many of the chapters have home pages on the Internet. Links to these pages may be found on the Ten Ten International page. The Houston SHOT page contains a link to the Ten Ten International page.

Summer E-layer propagation has been present many days on ten meters during the past month. These domestic openings usually produce weak to moderate signals, but occasionally very strong signals are present. The E-layer openings usually occur in the afternoon and evening, but may occur any time of the day. DX propagation to Latin America and the South Pacific has been more frequent in recent weeks. A number of Australian stations have checked into the SHOT net during the past month.

Remember, the Houston SHOT (Space Houston On Ten) net meets every Tuesday evening at 8 PM local time on 28.488 MHz. All amateurs are welcome to check in, even if they do not have a Ten Ten number. If you are not a member of Ten Ten International and wish to join the organization, please check in to the net. There are many exciting activities in Ten Ten, and many friendly people can be found on the ten meter band.

## B-VARC RAG CHEW Net Check-Ins for July by Sam Wilson, N5CPA

3.960MHz +/-3KHz Wednesdays at 8:00PM

Just WHAT IS the Rag-Chew Net? Well it's a chance for you to get on the low bands and hang out with other B-VARC members, as well as hams from around the south central US! What?? Don't have voice privileges? Got a short-wave receiver? Dial in and listen, then check in using the telephone number announced at the beginning of each net.

7/01/98---N5CPA, K5CEK, KC5SQD, KK5W, KA0TEN, N5OAC, K5LJ, W5GHK, W5EFB, AK5G, KB5DNT, KK5DO, W5RIY, W5IHY, KB5PGY, KG5KV, KC5OIG, K5TSP, W5TEM. (19)

7/08/98---N5CPA, W5EFB, KG5KV, K5CEK, KB5DNT, N5OAC, KB5PGY, W5GHK, WD8RZA, KK5W, KA0TEN, W5TEM, K5LJ. (13)

7/15/98---N5CPA, W5RIY, AK5G, KC5OIG, KK5W, KA0TEN, N5OAC. (7)

7/22/98---N5CPA, K5CEK, KB5DNT, KB5PGY, NM5K, AK5G, W5EFB, WD8RZA, KK5W, KK5NU, W5TEM, N5OAC, KG5KV. (13)

7/29/98---N5CPA, W5EFB, KB5PGY, K5LJ, W5GHK, WB5IIB, N5OAC, NM5K, W5TEM (9)

## RESULTS OF THE AUGUST 11<sup>TH</sup> AMATEUR EXAMS by: Harold Parker, ND5F

B-VARC again sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examinations that were held on Tuesday evening, August 11, 1998 at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory in Houston.

### V. E. TEAM:

Cass Germany, KG5IT  
Harold Parker, ND5F  
Lanny Pottet, KB5VTB

### ASSISTANTS:

Carl Albrecht, AA5JW  
Louis House, KD5GM  
John Moore, KK5NU

A total of 7 exams were administered during the evening to 4

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applicants. Three (3) un-licensed candidates received their new licenses: 1 Technician Plus and 2 Technicians with a total of 6 elements passed. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was 86%

Congratulations to all the following who passed exams:

Russell Canham - Technician  
Steven Davis - Technician  
Kevin Foto - Technician Plus

Many thanks to all the Team Members and Assistants who volunteer their valuable time and effort each month.

All of us at B-VARC again thank Vincent, WA5ETS, and everyone at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory for making these excellent classroom facilities available to us for our exams each month.

..... 73 .....73

ND5F

## **SCANNER JACK'S Corner** by Jack Roberts, KB5TMY

Here is the new Harris County TRS known as Clodine Trunked Radio System:

868.975	867.6625
868.950	867.5875
868.7625	867.5375
868.4875	867.4625
868.2375	867.0625
868.0875	866.9375
868.0375	866.5625
867.9875	866.4875
867.9625	866.4625
867.9375	866.0500
867.9125 Phone patch	866.0375

Add these to the old Harris county trunked system.  
Agencies that are now using this system are:

Alief Community VFD  
H. C. S. O.  
H. C. Pct. 5 Constables  
Katy P. D.  
Katy I. S. D.

Fulshear FD also uses 154.415 Fire ground dispatch

154.220 Dispatch

## **Monday night PSN check-ins**

Here are the check-ins for the Monday night Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club Public Service Information Net for the month of July 1998:

7/6/98 - 25  
7/13/98 - 21  
7/20/98 - 20  
7/27/98 - 30  
8/3/98 - 18  
8/10/98 - 26  
8/17/98 - 21

## **FOUND ON THE WEB BY RICK HILLER:**

An Ode to CW:

<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/tech/DailyNews/KWMorse980716.html> (no spaces).

## **Mobile HF Operation by W5RH Rick Hiller**

We spend a lot of our time in our cars here in Houston. So it might be enjoyable to increase your ways of passing the time by installing HF in your car. Solar flux numbers are getting better everyday, the higher bands are becoming more active and therefore, mobile operation is easier. There are a few areas of concern when installing a shortwave radio in your automobile and I'd like to provide you with some guidance based on personal experience.

**Bands of operation.** 20 17,15,10 are the great mobile bands (17 is my favorite). Propagation on these bands is great during the day during the sunspot cycle peak years and the antenna requirements are reduced or at least more amiable to mobile operation. Nothing precludes you from using the lower bands of 30, 40, 80 or 160 but antenna requirements become more demanding and, as a rule, antenna systems less efficient.

**Rig and Placement.** You might look at placing the HF in the car permanently, just like the VHF or UHF rig, so that you don't have to pull the equipment in and out. Older small rigs like the Icom 730, Kenwood TS-120 or TS -130, the Yaesu 747 can be bought in the \$300 plus range. Add an antenna, cabling, headset, auxiliary speaker, CW paddle, etc. and it will

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be just under the \$500 mark. Amplifiers can be used but consideration should be given to the increase in DC power demand, increased antenna requirements and most importantly the placement of the antenna with respect to the automotive electronics to avoid interference.

Placement of the rig is critical to the enjoyment. Installing the rig in a position where you have to reach for the dial is both unsafe and not fun. The vfo tuning knob should be 'at your finger tips', along with the volume, rit, rf gain and ptt switch. If you operate CW then the key should be adjacent to the rig and in your comfort zone. You will, after some time, operate the rig without looking, as you'll get to know it so well, especially if it's right at your finger tips.

**Power Source**--The DC power for all of your amateur transceivers should come directly from the battery via #12 or #10 stranded heavily insulated copper wire for both the positive and negative. A fuse, of the proper rating, should be provided within these leads. The connection to the battery can be made using stacon type ring lugs of the proper size placed underneath the tightening nuts of either the top stud and side stud battery mounting positions.

**Grounding**--Ground all accessories such as the SWR meter, antenna tuner, etc. directly to the rig. Ground the rig directly to the car's chassis via an 'as short as possible' heavy braided lead. This ground point should be as close as possible to the transceiver. Don't be fooled by a screw in the dash, it may not be grounded or if it does measure OK to ground it just might reach ground through a steel high loss support bracket. Go direct to the chassis/body ground point, even if you have to dig through carpet to get to it.

The antenna ground should be as close as possible to the antenna feed point to avoid losses. It should be attached to bare metal using anti-corrosion electrical compound and starwashers. Ground to the chassis and or body, whichever is closest. A good connection from the chassis to all body panels is desirable and necessary for good HF operation. See the ARRL handbook for details on specific installations and other mobile suggestions.

**Antenna**--Many articles have been written of the virtues and logistic of various HF antenna systems so I won't try to cover the complete subject of mobile antennas in this article. I will, however, give you some general rules which you should follow.

Use the longest antenna you can. Seems like antennas for all the bands except for 10,12 and 15 meters are too long physically and must be shortened/loaded in some way in order that they meet DPS requirements. 13' 6" is the maximum height. Try to use all of this available height, however, within the city you might have problems running a

maximum length whip but consider this option: have two different top whips that you can interchange depending on the situation. The long 'highway whip' can be used when you are on the open road while the shorter 'city whip' will keep you on the air but keep you out of the tree trimming business. Maximize your city whip by making it thicker than a regular steel whip. You can take an old helically wound fiberglass CB whip and place the shield portion of coaxial cable over the fiberglass rod. Connect this to the base metal and then cover the complete whip with shrunk heat shrink tubing. This thicker whip will provide more capacitance than a thinner whip and increase the system efficiency. (Contact me, I'll give you construction details)

The most efficient mobile antennas have been shown to possess the following qualities:

- \*Be as long as the law allows
- \*Use top/end(capacitive) loading first
- \*Use center loading, if inductive loading is necessary

Therefore, based on the above, a practical, but not efficient mobile antenna would be a Hustler system. It is a center loaded whip that is not even close to being the maximum usable length but it is convenient. A way to improve this system, touted by Jack, WN5A, is to use the next higher band's coil and use a longer top whip. (ie. For 20 meters use the 15 meter coil coupled with a much longer whip to resonate the system. The top whip can also be lengthened by using capacitive hat loading wires.

The next step up in system performance is the Texas Bug Catcher. A center loaded whip using a tappable large air wound coil. For each band change you must place the tap at a different location on the coil. An efficient system but it limits your band changing activities while driving.

Now combine these 2 antenna systems with some type of automated band changing and you have what is called the 'screwdriver' antenna (see ads in QST, 73 and CQ). It consists of a tubing type lower housing about 4 feet long. Inside this tube is a long coil which touches/contacts the top end of the tubing. As a piece of All-Thread is rotated by a cordless screwdriver motor (hence the name) the coil moves up and out of the lower tubing thus exposing or unshorting the coil stock. A whip is placed on top of and connected to the coil assembly. This coil can be extended to maximum length for use on the 80 or 160 meter bands or can be fully retracted for use on the 10 meter band. Correct adjustment is monitored by the SWR bridge at the transceiver end in your passenger compartment. The screw driver is the best of all antenna worlds but the mounting requirements can be a bit taxing at times on some cars.

**RFI**--If you should have a problem with RFI getting into your HF receiver or your transmitter interferes with the proper

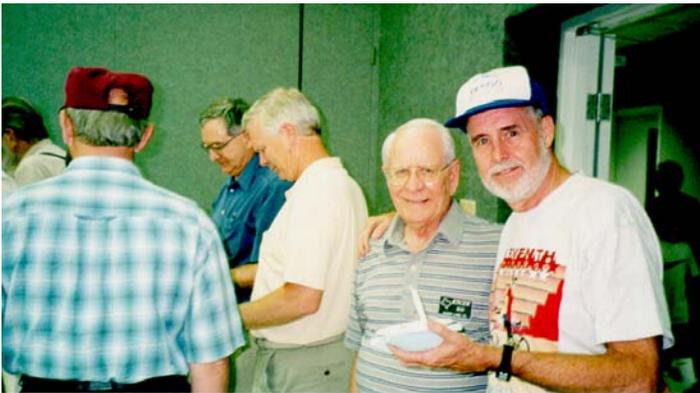
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operation of your cars electronics, please reference the 1996 QST article concerning the different automotive manufacturers technical contact points. Also see the ARRL web site information on mobile installations and RFI.

**Security**--Rig theft is something no one likes to have happened. With simple prevention and common sense your rig will be secure. For one, place a towel or other cover material over the rig anytime it is not in operation (also protects it from UV rays). Keep mikes and other accessories out of site. Keep you car locked and parked in safe areas. If you are not sure of the area you are in, pull the rig out and place it in the trunk.

**Summary**-- This article could have gone deeper into each aspect of mobile operation. Each topic is important for the

enjoyment and well being of the driver/ham operator. So give it some serious thought to place an HF rig in your car. Mobile operation can certainly pass the time on a long drive or can take your mind off your work at lunch, in the middle of a hectic day. The mobile rig can help you improve your CW skills in that you have to head copy, at least while you are driving. It also offers an alternative to the typical repeater QSO. If we get enough hams with HF mobiles in their cars, then maybe we can have an HF drive time roundtable. Now that sounds like fun....and fun is what Ham Radio is all about! 73....W5RH



Howard, Larry, Bud, and Irv



Eric, friend, David, Henry, Rex, Betty, Dan, and Linda (?)



Prez, Mahana, and Claude



And the winner is Betty KA0TEN

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