



# BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

APRIL 2005

VOLUME 29 | ISSUE 4

## THE MARCH MEETING

Our President, Mike Hardwick, N5VCX, gave the featured presentation. This topic was repeaters. Mike had a repeater for all to see. Mike had a repeater for all to see.



“Doc” showing off an old license

## LICENSE PREP CLASSES - THEORY & CODE

Classes will be given, beginning Monday, April 11 for both theory and code. The first classes will be for code, technician class and general class with extra class theory to follow. Classes will be held once per week for 4-5 weeks for code to 6 – 8 weeks for the various theory classes. Membership in BVARC is not required and there is no charge for the classes.

The class location will be at the St. Paul Presbyterian Church complex, Rooms 103 & 104, 7200 Bellaire Blvd, near the SW Freeway, beginning at 6:30.

For the Theory class, contact - Ross Lawler, W5HFF, at 281-342-3340, [w5hff@yahoo.com](mailto:w5hff@yahoo.com)

For the Code class, contact – John Chauvin, K5IZO, at 713-981-8281, [k5izo@yahoo.com](mailto:k5izo@yahoo.com)

## BVARC Mix-N-Match SWAPMEET A SUCCESS

See details in the President’s Message.



## APRIL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The April meeting takes place at 7:30PM, April 14 at the Sugar Land Community Center, 226 Matlage Way. The featured presentation will be given by the Falkland Islands DXpedition team.

**FIELD DAY - JUNE 25 & 26!!!!**

## More Mix-N-Match Swapmeet Pictures



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## President's Corner

It seemed like it wouldn't happen but the 4th Annual Mix-n-Match Swap Meet was a roaring success. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and the club made over \$800 as well. The swap meet had over 300 people visiting and over 20 people selling equipment. We had three commercial vendors as well as representatives from ARES and Fort Bend County EMROG. Hopefully everyone was able to visit the mobile command posts from Sugar Land and Harris County Sheriff's department. Last but not least, Rodney Rod of TARMA brought his communications trailer to display as well. Overall a great turnout for BVARC and the amateur radio community.

Now on to 2006 for the swap meet. We are already facing a problem for a location. Sugar Land parks department changed the way the community center is booked and unfortunately the first weekend of March is already taken. The organizers of the swap meet are looking for a suitable space in the area so stay tuned to the newsletter for more information.

To make things worse, we lost our warehouse space at the end of March. Hopefully we kind find something with similar arrangements (this means free) at some other warehouse location. Keep listening the to the Monday night net for more information.

Starting on April 11th, Ross, W5HFF and John, K5IZO will be teaching amateur radio classes and Morse code classes. The classes will last 6 to 8 weeks depending on the type of class. If you would like more information, contact either Ross or John or any of the board of directors.

And last but not least, Field Day is just around the corner. Are you ready for it? Would you like to help out this year? If so, contact either Allen, N5XZ or Ross, W5HFF or John, K5IZO and let them know that you are ready to volunteer.

I will not be at the April meeting due to the MS150 Bike Ride. As most of you know, I coordinate the communications for the event and the week of the general meeting, I will be working on the ride preparations. More on the MS150 else where in the newsletter. Remember if you would like to volunteer for any public service event, give me a call and I will make sure that someone contact you from the event. Working the vents puts your radio and license to a very good use.

73  
N5VCX

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## Monday Night NET Updates

Don't forget the Monday Night Public Service Net starts at **8 pm**. 146.88 Mhz, PL 103.5 (backup – 145.45, PL –none). The order of check-ins start with mobile units first then fixed stations. If you have something for the net, make sure you let Net Control know about it when you check in. We are looking for Net Control Operators. Contact any officer of BVARC if you are interested. Here are recent check-ins with control-ops:

12/6 - 25 - Cam, k5cam  
12/13 - 21 - Mike, n5vcx  
12/20 - 23 - Joe, k5jwm  
12/27 - 22? - Doug, kc5vyz  
1/3 - 24 - Doug, kc5vyz

1/10 - 19 - Mike, n5vcx  
1/17 - 19 - Joe, k5jwm  
1/24 - 23 - Cam, k5cam  
1/31 - 21 - Sid, n5zkd  
2/7 - 27 - Cam, k5cam

2/14 - 22 - Mike, n5vcx  
2/21 - 23 - Joe, k5jwm  
2/28 - 27 - Doug, kc5vyz  
3/7 - 20 - Cam, k5cam  
3/14 - 28 - Larry, k5lj  
3/21 - 25 - Joe, k5jwm



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## Upcoming Hamfests

Hamfest info for the next few months. More information at: <http://www.arrl.org/hamfests.html#listing>

### **BELTON HAM EXPO -**

**April 30, 2005**

Bell County Expo Center in Belton, Texas  
From I-35 take Exit 292 to the Dome  
Doors open at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 30  
VE Testing at 1:00 p.m. onsite  
Admission: \$1.00  
Talk-in Freqs: 146.82- (PL 123.0)

<http://www.tarc.org/hamradio/hamexpo/oct2002early.html>

### **ARLINGTON HAMCOM**

**June 3,4,5** Arlington, TX  
**ARRL West Gulf Division Convention**  
Friday: Noon – 9:00 p.m.  
Saturday: 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday: 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

VE Testing; Speakers; Programs.  
General Admission:

Adult - \$9, Family Member - \$4, Student – Free.  
For more info: <http://www.hamcom.org>

# CW – Why I Love It

By John Chauvin, K5IZO

This is not another “Code – No Code” article. This article simply cites, as an absolute, why the author loves CW for it’s own merit. There are clear advantages to CW as there are clear advantages to SSB and other modes. Similar discussions can be had for each.

Hopefully the readers will see the many benefits of the art of CW and add it into their repertoire.

1. **Bandwidth (BW) is very narrow: Thus it uses a lot less spectrum. It is possible to have many more QSOs per KHz than other modes. Yes, the information rate is probably comparable (data rate / bandwidth) to other modes if one wants to consider rag chewing but for general quick QSOs, there is no comparison. No guilt of conspicuous consumption.**
2. **For only modest operator CW speeds, it can be much faster in contests than SSB.**
3. **Signals can be pulled out of the noise much easier than voice modes. I’m always amazed how many times I listen to SSB and hear about the current “bad” conditions and then I go make a bunch of CW (even DX) QSOs.**
4. **For DX, there is no comparison.**
5. **For marginal, and especially varying propagation conditions (fading), a CW QSO will always be held longer than SSB.**
6. **It is different. AM/SSB/FM are utilizations of our regular communications (voice).**
7. **There are special CW groups such as slow and fast HF nets as well as the international organization known as FISTS that has over 10,000 members.**
8. **Transmitted signals are much less likely to have RFI. Signals are purer and have fewer harmonics.**
9. **Transmitted signals with bad modulation and bad tone are much easier to decipher than those with similar problems on SSB.**
10. **CW is easier to tune in. No fiddling is required to get the pitch just right so you can understand it.**
11. **Tuning can be varied to get best “sound” of the desired signal vs. QRM.**
12. **Notching can eliminate some of the CW QRM. This doesn’t work on wider bandwidth modes.**
13. **CW is foreign language friendly. Two people with different native tongues can have a modest “conversation.”**
14. **CW is historical.**
15. **CW is a learned skill and not simply an extension of current skills.**
16. **Electronics requirements for CW are simpler, actually making homebrews feasible.**
17. **QRP rigs for CW are much more achievable than for other modes.**
18. **CW equipment is less expensive than other modes.**
19. **A stealth station is easier to accomplish than other modes.**
20. **If BPL takes hold, CW operators will be much less affected.**
21. **When listening for CW, one hears less noise. With filters, one only hears noise from a BW of 250 or 500 Hz. For SSB (for example), with filters it is 2-3 KHz.**
22. **When listening for CW, one hears less QRM. With the above filters, one only hears those in their BW (250-500 Hz), not the 2-3 KHz.**
23. **Less power is required. Not everyone has a KW.**
24. **For normal emergency communications, certainly CW is not preferred. For remote emergencies, CW signals get through and batteries can last longer due to the option to run much lower power.**
25. **Some CW receivers, not just transmitters, use less power.**
26. **Using CW helps keep our (hams in general) modes options open (use or lose).**
27. **I can operate in my own home “stealth” to family members. It is possible, and is practiced, to have CW in progress (using earphones) in your bedroom with your spouse asleep.**
28. **I can be very relaxed while operating. I have a high back chair and if conditions are bad or bands are slow, I almost fall asleep while “searching and pouncing” or calling CQ (I usually don’t write down the entire QSO but rather just a few key words). I only have to pipe up to enter the QSO information in the computer log.**
29. **It takes less personal energy. I don’t have to use my voice.**
30. **I don’t get hoarse during extended contests.**
31. **Because voice is not used, this makes amateur radio possible for many who have raspy voices, infirm voices, colds or other forms of illness or simply prefer to relax to go on the air. People with injuries or handicaps have devised clever ways to use CW.**
32. **One friend cited that he got a thrill from being able to complete a QSO when he dropped his microphone and it no longer worked.**
33. **In some instances, one can call a SSB DX station using CW when he is outside the legal US SSB range and ask him to listen on another frequency that you may transmit on.**
34. **It is “cool.” Some view it as an accomplishment. Youngsters view it as a secret language.**
35. **Some get a thrill from communicating with others in a “language” that is unknown to most people**
36. **Most importantly however, it is FUN!**

Give CW an honest try! You might love it too.

# THE BVARC Rag Chew Net

By Joe Morgan, K5JWM

February 2005 check-ins

3910 KHz +/-3KHz Wednesdays at 7:00PM

Joe Morgan, K5JWM, Net Coordinator

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.

02/02/05\_\_K5JWM, K5CEK, N5CPA, K5LJ, W5UHZ, WA5VRB. Check ins(06)

02/09/05\_\_K5JWM, N5CPA, K5CEK, K5VRJ, AB5BA, W5HFF, WA5VRB, WB5VYR, N5VXU, W5UHZ, KG5RQ. Check ins(11)

02/16/05\_\_K5JWM, KE5CDE, WB5SRN, N5CPA, K5CEK, K5LJ, K5VRJ, AB5BA, WA5VRB, NM5K. Check ins(10)

02/23/05\_\_K5JWM, N5CPA, K5CEK, W5RH, K5VRJ, AB5BA, KE5CDE, KA5JKI, W5UHZ, W5HFF, WA5VRB, WA5VYR. Check ins(12)

**Houston Amateur Radio Supply**  
 181 Cypresswood Drive  
 Houston, Texas 77388 - 6038  
 281-355-7373 800-471-7373 281-355-8007/Fax  
 Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
 Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. *George Di Letto KD0RW*  
 Repair most brands of radios, amps, and other gear  
 Factory Authorized Repair center for ICOM and Yaesu  
 Trade-ins Welcome, Consignment Service,  
 30 day warranty on used equipment 06/04

## B-Varc Calendar - April, 2005

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2 Breakfast 7:30 AM
3	4 Net 8:00 pm 146.880	5	6 HF Net 7:00 pm 3910 +/-3KHz	7 BOD Meeting 7:30 pm	8	9 Breakfast 7:30 AM
10	11 License Classes, 6:30 PM Net 8:00 pm 146.880	12 VE Session 6:30 pm	13 HF Net 7:00 pm 3910 +/-3KHz	14 Club Meeting 7:30 pm	15 Friday BVARC supper, 7:30 PM	16 MS-150 Breakfast 7:30 AM
17 MS-150	18 License Classes, 6:30 PM Net 8:00 pm 146.880	19	20 HF Net 7:00 pm 3910 +/-3KHz	21	22	23 Breakfast 7:30 AM
24	25 License Classes, 6:30 PM Net 8:00 pm 146.880	26	27 HF Net 7:00 pm 3910 +/-3KHz	28	29	30 Belton Hamfest Breakfast 7:00 AM



## The BP MS150 Houston to Austin Bike Tour - April 16 & 17

Every April the Lone Star Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Holds the 2 day BPMS150 Bike Tour. This is one of the premier cycling events in the United States and riders and volunteers come from all over the county to attend the 12,000 plus participant event. The large event is also one of the largest amateur radio public service events in the Houston area utilizing over 125 operators last year helping and providing communications for the event. With an event like this, more operators are needed each year to provide communications for everything from life saving situations to crowd control.

Since amateur radio operators are the primary communications for the MS150 and provide communications on the entire ride from Houston to Austin, operators are assigned with several different groups or they are stationed at different locations along the route. Some of the positions are:

- Break points** Providing communications for supplies and medical problems. Normally a 1 day commitment but depends on your location.
- Medical vehicles** Operators ride in ambulances and First Responder vehicles for emergency communications. This is 2 day commitment
- MS150 Staff** Operators ride with MS150 staff to provide communications for important issues and problems during the ride. This is 2 day commitment
- SAG vehicles** Provided communications for the SAG drivers who are on the course picking up riders that have mechanical problems or that cannot ride. This is 2 day commitment
- Supply Trucks** Provide communications for the supply trucks so supplies can be routed to the needed locations. This is 2 day commitment.
- NET Control** Net controls operations are set up in Houston, Bellville, LaGrange and Austin. There are two NETS running at all times and many operators are needed to cover this very important position. This is a 1 or 2 day commitment depending on your location.
- Houston Command Post** The command post oversees medical incidents, and other problems on the ride. The command post monitors the ride on HF, or VHF or UHF amateur bands. Medical vehicles are tracked with APRS units along the entire course. The command post is set up to receive calls from event personal and emergency services along the route through 800 telephone numbers to coordinate emergency calls and situations. - You can work from 1 hour to two days. The command post is open from midnight Friday to midnight Sunday.
- Motorcycle Hams** If you have a motorcycle and an amateur radio license, you can help out with the Motorcycle group that needs volunteers. With an amateur radio on your motorcycle you can be in contract with the action on the ride. You can contact Jerry Irwin, WA0GLD, at [F16Jock@earthlink.net](mailto:F16Jock@earthlink.net)

Volunteers need at least a 2 Meter/VHF radio (dual band preferred) that has at least 25 watts output and a gain type antenna. If you are stationed in a MS vehicle your radio must be easily transferred between any vehicle since you may be moved from one vehicle to another during the ride.

Food and sleeping areas (you need to bring your own bed linens) are provided by the MS150 organization. A secure parking area will be provided for your vehicle. Volunteer hours begin at 4:30 am on April 17 and end around 7 pm on April 18. There will be two information meetings the week before the ride one on April 12th and one on April 14th. For more information please go to [www.houstonhams.org](http://www.houstonhams.org) or you can sign up at the BP MS 150 Volunteer Signup Page at <http://ms150.org/ms150/volunteer/signup.cfm> .

If you would like more information on the event or how you can help out, please contact me at 713-826-6917 or send an e-mail on the [www.houstonhams.org](http://www.houstonhams.org) web site

Mike Hardwick, N5VCX      Communications Coordinator, BP MS150 Bike Tour

## 2005 Club Officers:

President:

Mike Hardwick, N5VCX  
n5vcx@worldnet.att.net

Vice President:

Allen Brier, N5XZ  
n5xz@arrl.net

Corresponding Secretary/Treasurer:

Ross Lawler, W5HFF  
w5hff@yahoo.com

Recording Secretary:

Joe Morgan, K5JWM  
k5jwm@att.net

One Year Board Member:

Robert Polanski, KD5YVQ  
polinski@swbell.net

Two Year Board Member:

Sid Sherwood, N5ZKD  
n5zkd@arrl.net

Past President:

Kevin Foto, KD5O  
foto@texas.net

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## Club Happenings:

### General Meeting

Second Thursday each month,  
Sugar Land Community Center,  
226 Matlage Way

### Board of Directors Meeting

First Thursday of each month,  
Sugar Land Community Center,  
226 Matlage Way

### Volunteer Examiner Program

BVARC administers Amateur License Exams  
on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the HCC  
Scarcella Technology Campus,

10141 Cash Rd. in Stafford.  
Contact John Moore, KK5NU

### Eating Schedule

Third Friday Dinner at 7:30 p.m.  
Location announced in the calendar.

### Saturday morning breakfasts –

7:30 a.m. New York Coffee Shop  
9720 Hillcroft, Houston  
7:30 a.m. Viking Den  
2939 S. Main, Stafford

### Rag Chew Net

3910 KHz +/-3KHz Wednesdays  
at 7:00 p.m.

### Public Service Net

Monday night on 146.88 (103.5 PL) at 8:00 PM

# BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March, 2005

There was not a quorum at the normal board meeting time, so no formal meeting was held. Check the web-site for any details that might have recently transpired.

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## Amateur Radio Exams

The March exams were given at the Mix-N-Match Swapmeet site. As this issue goes to press, the details are not available. The results will be combined with the April results in the next newsletter.

The next testing session will be at the usual time and place: That is the second Tuesday of the month, April 12.

Houston Community College,  
Scarcella Technology Center  
10141 Cash Road  
Stafford, TX

Check in about 6:30 PM - exams start promptly at 7 PM. Parking is readily available in the rear lot -- Inquire at the 'front desk' for our room assignment. Cash Road intersects Murphy Road (FM 1092) at about the 13,500 block, between Greenbriar-Mula Road and the UPRR - US 90A crossings. Turn East on Cash Road; the community college building is on the \*right\* or south side of the street.

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## BVARC EATING SCHEDULE:

### SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFASTS:

NEW YORK COFFEE SHOP, 7:30a.m., 9720 Hillcroft, Houston.  
VIKING DEN, 7:30a.m., 2939 S. Main (US90A), Stafford.

### THIRD FRIDAY DINNERS:

April 15, 7:30p.m., PANDA GARDEN CHINESE RESTAURANT  
1043 Eldridge Road at Jesse Pirtle Blvd.  
In Sugar Land (1mile +/- N. of US90A).

May 20, 7:30p.m., LAFAYETTE CAJUN SEAFOOD RESTAURANT,  
10829 W. Bellfort at Wilcrest in Houston, in  
S.E. quadrant of intersection.



Monthly Publication of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club.  
Serving Amateur Radio for Southwest Houston and Fort Bend County  
Club Call sign - KC5OIG, W5DPA  
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**Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club (BVARC)** was organized in 1978, primarily as an emergency communications group available to assist the communities of Missouri City and Stafford when required. Since that time, **BVARC** has grown and expanded its activities to become the most active amateur radio club in the Southwest Houston and Fort Bend County.

Today **BVARC** is truly a general interest amateur radio club along with an impressive record of public service. The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) has recognized the club's commitment of service with the coveted status of Special Services Club. We are proud of our members who represent some of the finest in amateur radio. Membership is not limited to licensed operators, but is open to anyone with an interest in amateur radio. Club meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Sugar Land Community Center, 226 Matlege Way. Talk-in assistance for the club meeting is available on the 146.880 repeater (minus offset, 103.5 tone). General membership dues are \$20.00 per year, with student dues \$10.00 per year, additional family members \$2.00 per member per year and life membership \$160.00.

**BVARC** also administers amateur radio license exams on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the Houston Community College's Scarcella campus in Stafford. A Public Service Net is held each Monday at 8:00 p.m. on the 146.880 (minus offset with a 103.5 tone) repeater and a rag chew net is held each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. on 3910 KHz +/- 3 KHz.

To obtain information about joining **BVARC** or its activities contact the club's "Elmer", Ross Lawler, W5HFF at 281-342-3340 or [w5hff@yahoo.com](mailto:w5hff@yahoo.com) or the BVARC website at [www.hal-pc.org/~bvarc](http://www.hal-pc.org/~bvarc).

**VOLUME 29, ISSUE 4**

**April 2005**

**BRAZOS VALLEY  
AMATEUR RADIO CLUB  
P.O. BOX 1630  
MISSOURI CITY TX 77459-1630  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**FIRST CLASS POSTAGE**

**Amateur Radio License Classes – 6:30 PM, April 11  
General Membership Meeting – 7:30, April 14**

*If your mailing label is  
highlighted in color its time  
to renew your membership!*