



BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 2007

VOLUME 31 ISSUE 9

BVARC SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

7:30 PM, Thursday, September 13, 2007.

Sugar Land Community Center

Technical Presentation – “Fun With Transmission Lines” by W5RH -- September 13th Meeting --

The presentation will provide a wide range of technical instruction on feed lines and their use within the amateur Radio antenna system to provide RF power transfer, matching and phasing. Software will be demonstrated to assist you in solving feed system problems normally resolved by the use of the well known Smith Chart. A reference sheet full of related articles, web sites and free software links will be provided to all attendees and an **Antenna Feedline Contest** will be held. The winners of the contest will be awarded a CD of the recent writings of the infamous “Kurt N. Sterba” from the Aerials column in World Radio Magazine.

AUGUST GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING / ICE CREAM SOCIAL REPORT

As usual, everyone enjoyed the Ice Cream Social. Mike led a short 5 minute meeting and then adjourned so we could all dig in. There were at least 2 people that brought homebrew ice cream. Blue Bell always loves it when we have this event.



President's Corner

Summer is over and the end of the year is just around the corner. With only four club meetings left there is still so much to do for the club. If you have the time to volunteer your time or services, please contact someone on the board and let them know. We need volunteers for the following:

Storage space coordinator – Sid needs his extra bedroom and we need a consolidated location for the club's materials. We also need the space to free or a very small monthly fee of no more than \$10 per month. We need help badly on this!

Chili Supper Organizer – November is the club's annual chili supper cook-off and someone needs to be the head "Chili Head" to take care of this event. The person that does this gets to be the first one in line to taste ALL of the chili!

Home Brew Night - Several years ago Kevin Foto, KD5O, started this program which has been a great addition to BVARC annual programs. The best of homebrew equipment is brought out for show and tell. We even allow kits, especially ones that have lots of flashing lights and knobs (lots of knobs)! Who ever takes this on gets all of the left over coax from my last antenna project!

Of course November is the club elections. Three positions will be open for someone to step and run the show. If you think you can handle either the president's slot or recording secretary or a directorship, please contact John Moore, KK5NU, the election coordinator. Remember for the club to survive, it need's your help.

Hope to see everyone at the next meeting in September. Keep the airwaves alive!

73, N5VCX

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<http://texasparadise.com/hars/> George DiLetto KD0RW

Monday Night NET Updates

Don't forget the Monday Night Public Service Net starts at **8 pm**, 145.47 (PL -123.0). 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:

3/19- 17 - Sid, n5zkd	5/14 - 33 - Bill, ws5h	7/9 - 24 - Bill, ws5h
3/26 - 21 - Cam, k5cam	5/21 - 14 - Sid, n5zkd	7/16 - 16 - Sid, n5zkd
4/2 - 22 - Cam, k5cam	5/28 - 16 - Pete, kd5qpx	7/23 - 24 - Pete, kd5qpx
4/9 - 26 - Bill, ws5h	6/4 - 24 - Cam, k5cam	7/30 - 27 - Doug, kc5vyz
4/16 17 - Bill, ws5h	6/11 - 33 - Bill, ws5h	8/6 - 26 - Cam, k5cam
4/23 - 26 - Pete, kd5qpx	6/18 - 24 - Sid, n5zkd	8/13 - 29 - Bill, ws5h
4/30 - 22 - Doug, kc5vyz	6/25 - 21 - Pete, kd5qpx	8/20 - 18 - Mike, n5vcx
5/7 - 24 - Cam, k5cam	7/2 - 18 - Cam, k5cam	8/27 - 27 - Pete, kd5qpx

NARS Sept. 21 meeting featuring Coy Day.

Please see the announcement in last month's newsletter.

Upcoming Public Service Events

If you would like to put your radio and license to a good use, come out and volunteer your time to help with several non-profit events coming up over the next few weeks and months. If you need more information give me a call at 713-826-6917. I will be glad to tell you about the event and the requirements. After working public service events in the Houston area for the last 15 years, I can just about answer any questions you have (it may not be the right answer but it will be an answer)!

Tour de Pink Bike Ride
Saturday, September 9th, 2007
7:00 am Prairie View University

Fifteen operators are needed for this event. Everyone will meet at the Denny's on FM1960 just north of Hwy 290 at 4:30 am for maps and tee-shirts and final route information. Event and talk-in will be on the 444.075, tone 103.5 repeater. Mobile radios are needed for this event.

Wings Over Houston Airshow
Saturday, October 6 and Sunday, October 7, 2007
Ellington Field, Houston

Sixty five operators are needed for this event. Send me your contact information and I will forward it to the event coordinators. Normally a 2 meter hand held radio will work for this event.

Lyondell Bike around the Bay Bike Ride
Saturday, October 20th and Sunday, October 21st, 2007
8:00 am

This two day event needs 35 operators for all positions. The event starts in Anahauc and ends in Galveston for the first day. The second day is from Galveston back to Anahauc. There will be a communications meeting the week before the ride on October 13th at 10 am at 8111 North Stadium Drive. Overnight accommodations can be arranged. UHF mobile radios are needed for this event.

BVARC Greater Houston Hamfest Update

Preparations for the BVARC Greater Houston Hamfest have already begun. Commitments have been made to have even additional space at the Ft. Bend County Fairgrounds. We will have nearly 150 tables available for vendors and private sellers (last year we had less than 100). A personalized mailing was sent to 160 prospective vendors and a mass e-mail campaign will be sent out to almost 200 people who have had tables or tailgates at other hamfests. Other long lead items such as prizes, featured speaker, etc. are being worked on. The Grand Prize this time will be an IC-7000 Transceiver. We will also have a Second Prize consisting of a complete Satellite QSO worth 2m/70cm HT, antenna and duplexer. Coy Day, N5OK, the ARRL West Gulf Division Director, will be our featured speaker.

You can now go to the hamfest website for details: www.houstonhamfest.org

We are the fastest growing hamfest in Texas and probably all of the Southwest. In order for us to continue growing, we will need much more participation by BVARC members. If you can only spend 2 hours that day assisting, all the BVARC members would welcome it. You don't need to assist to the degree of other members who have, or will, spend many hours or days in preparation and actual execution of the event.

If you wish to participate, then try to eat dinner with us (dutch treat) at the first detailed organizational meeting which will take place at Denny's, on the inbound access road of US59, just past Gessner. The meeting starts at 7:30 PM, Thursday, Sept. 20.

Tnx es 73,
de John, K5IZO, BGHH Co-Coordinator

BLT-23 – Another Exciting Launch by the South Texas Balloon Launch Team by Allen Mattis N5AFV

On Saturday morning, August 25, 2007, over two dozen people, mostly amateur radio operators, gathered at Wharton Airport for the launch of BLT-23 by the South Texas Balloon Launch Team. No problems developed during the filling of the BLT-23 balloon with helium, and the launch took place at 10:08 AM CDT. The balloon climbed at the rate of just over 1000 feet per minute, reaching an altitude of approximately 89,200 feet before bursting. The descent was controlled by a parachute and took over thirty minutes. The balloon landed on private property 31 miles west of the launch site. A small airplane circled over the downed balloon until chase vehicles arrived to recover the payload. The vehicles could drive to within 0.2 miles of the downed balloon, and three members of the balloon launch team recovered the payload on foot.



The Near Picture-Perfect Launch of BLT-23

The balloon carried a number of payloads. The main payload consisted of color and infrared ATV cameras sending real-time pictures on a downlink of 1255 FM with a power of 900 mW. The flight video obtained from BLT-23 was some of the best ever from a launch of the South Texas Balloon Launch Team. The balloon also carried a crossband FM Repeater with an uplink of 147.435 MHz and a downlink of 446.000 MHz. Some of the other payloads were an APRS GPS downlink, a backup APRS GPS downlink, and a digital camera which took a picture every 15 seconds.

BLT-23 also provided the opportunity for the South Texas Balloon Launch Team to try something new. The balloon carried a small rocket that was designed for a low-altitude launch at approximately 5000 feet. Inside the rocket was a transmitter that would send a 25 mW carrier beacon on 50.350 MHz to aid in recovery of the rocket. A digital camcorder was set up on the balloon to watch the rocket. Unfortunately, the rocket failed to ignite when the command was sent. Preliminary analysis of the command receiver in the balloon indicated that one of the battery contacts on a 1.5 VDC lithium battery apparently failed even though it tested good just prior to launch.



BLT-23 Airborne Just Seconds after Launch

A special event call sign, W5B, was obtained for the launch. This special call sign was used for the transmitters on the balloon, and to work stations calling in on the crossband repeater carried by the balloon. In addition, the call sign was also used by a special event station Saturday morning to make a total of 21 contacts on two passes of OSCAR AO-51 from the Wharton Airport.

The South Texas Balloon Launch Team's first balloon, BLT-1, was launched from Huntsville, Texas on December 8, 1990. The team has launched more than 23 balloons in the last 17 years. One thing that has changed in the last year is that the cost of helium has almost doubled. Those who missed the launch of BLT-23 might want to consider attending the next launch of the South Texas Balloon Launch Team.

BVARC Historical Vignettes – Memorial Emergency Radio Association (MERA)

Allen Mattis N5AFV, Club Historian

Two earlier BVARC Historical Vignettes related the story of how BVARC struggled from 1977 through 1981 to have a 2-meter repeater that would be available for the club nets and for members to use on a regular basis. During that time period, the club used both the 146.16/.76 MHz Sugar Land Repeater located on the sugar mill near BVARC's current meeting site, and the Cypress Repeater Group (CRG) 147.60/.00 MHz repeater located on Dewalt Tower.

For a time, negotiations with Southwest Memorial Hospital appeared to be progressing for installation of a repeater on the hospital. However, an article in the March 1983 B-VARC Bulletin stated "In March, 1980, an agreement was executed between the Memorial Hospital System and B-VARC, Inc. to provide for the installation of a repeater on the hospital. Unfortunately, due to a number of setbacks, the installation was never made..." At the April 14, 1983 BVARC general membership meeting, Bob Spradling W5UBD, was authorized to dissolve the Southwest Emergency Radio Repeater Corporation that had been set up to operate a repeater under the 1980 agreement with the Memorial Hospital System. Even though this first attempt at having a repeater on Memorial Southwest Hospital had fallen apart, a foundation had been laid that would eventually bring results.

A surprising turn of events was announced in the March 1983 B-VARC Bulletin when club members learned that on February 7, 1983 the Memorial Hospital System signed an agreement with BVARC which would allow two repeaters to be installed on top of Southwest Memorial Hospital. Mark Schneider's WB5RDK repeater was moved to the hospital location almost immediately, and the Memorial Emergency Radio Association (MERA) began to take shape as preparations for a second repeater on the hospital were underway. BVARC leaders wasted no time getting MERA up and running. The experience gained by setting up the Southwest Emergency Radio Repeater Corporation (SERRC) in the earlier attempt to place a repeater on Southwest Memorial Hospital was put to good use.

Officers for MERA were elected on May 26, 1983. The July 1983 issue of the B-VARC Bulletin contained an excellent summary of the first MERA meeting:

B-VARC BULLETIN
JULY 1983

-6-

NEW REPEATER GROUP GETS UNDER WAY

On May 26, 1983, a group of HAMS met for the purpose of discussing the technical considerations of a new area repeater to be located at the Southwest Memorial Hospital. While these HAMS happen to be B-VARC members, the meeting was not represented to be a B-VARC function. This difference is being made to assert that those B-VARC members who chose not to/cannot utilize a 2-meter repeater will also have a choice as to the extent of support they may give to a new repeater, one which will be under the auspices of B-VARC, though not owned by B-VARC.

To learn more about the reasons why, W5UBD is a good source of information. Please put your questions to him or other members of this new repeater group.

At the meeting of the 26th, a motion was moved, seconded and passed with one dissenting vote. The motion accepted was "W5UBD present to the Hospital, the idea of two corporation entities. The first, under private ownership as discussed and agreed upon by WB5RDK, N5BXP, N5FAB, W5UBD, & WB5MXX, in January-February, 1983 and the second, a new corporation, under the auspices of B-VARC. Both corporations shall strive to place into operation and maintain amateur radio equipment to facilitate communications with the Hospital and amateur radio operators under emergency situation.

A second motion, moved by W5UBD passed, again with one dissenting vote. The motion read that "...Tom Cole, WB5MXX, be offered the position of Chairman of the Board of the Memorial Emergency Radio Association (MERA).

On June 9, 1983, following the regular B-VARC meeting, the whole of B-VARC membership attending the regular meeting were invited to stay for the second meeting of the new repeater group. Twenty-two members did form the meeting and accordingly its organizational membership. Election of officers was conducted as follows:

Chairman--Tom Cole, WB5MXX (Tom accepted the offer per the 26 May meeting)

Vice Chairman-- Tom Casey, WA5ACF

Sec/Treas--Bob Grady, N5DQR

Four Trustees of the Board--Bob Spradling, W5UBD

Harold Parker, ND5F

Vic LaRocca, K5KNH

Mike Armatta, N5APC

W5UBD was also accepted as the registered agent for the new group.

Anyone wishing to make a tax-deductible donation toward the accomplishment of this new and important Club project should make a check payable to the Memorial Emergency Radio Association and mail it to Bob Spradling, W5UBD, 12306 Dorrance Lane, Stafford, Tx. 77477. Funds are necessary to purchase the equipment required to place a repeater on the air. This repeater will serve the needs of the Club and will be an important addition to the Club's capability to provide a service to the public and aid to the hospital communication availability. The sooner we can acquire the equipment, the sooner these purposes can be fulfilled. It is planned that the Association will be self-supporting in the future.

Remember, your donation to this Association is tax-deductible.

According to the B-VARC Bulletin, at the August 1983 BVARC general membership meeting "Tom Casey, WA5ACF, gave a report on the Club's repeater and announced that the repeater has an assigned frequency of 145.25 MHz as repeater output with an input frequency of 144.65 MHz. The repeater does have a slight RFI problem which is caused by leakage from Cable TC companies." Leakage from the cable television system in the Houston metropolitan area often made it difficult to hear the repeater on 145.25 MHz, and the VHF repeater frequency coordinator advised MERA that it would be at least 6 months before another frequency pair would be available.

A MERA report dated December 21, 1983 was published in the January 1984 B-VARC Bulletin. The report gives insight into how installation of the repeater on top of the hospital was accomplished by a series of planned steps in a logical order.

MERA REPORT, Dec. 21, 1983

Bob Grady N5DQR

1. Repeater Status

5.25 machine presently operable at OTH of Ron Bolyard KA5GYG.

Duplexers tuned and ready to be installed.

Tower is installed and about 20 feet above hospital roof.

Ringo Ranger II is at hospital and ready for installation.

Blank control board has been ordered and will be "stuffed" and integrated upon its arrival.

Tentative target date for fully operational machine on the hospital is January 9, 1984.

Tom Casey WA5ACF has been given permission to change trusteeship to Jim Arnold W5RNK and to secure a different permanent pair of frequencies.

2. Treasury now has \$116.20 in the bank account. Vic LaRocca K5KNH has been appointed Finance Committee Chairman.

3. By-Laws are being prepared by Ron Bolyard KA5GYG and Stu Lamkin WB5IGG.

4. Operations Committee

Mike Armatta N5APC has been elected Chairman and will be in charge of control operations.

Meanwhile, the 6-month wait for a new frequency pair not affected by cable television leakage turned into 18 months. The February 1985 B-VARC Bulletin finally announced a frequency change for the repeater:

From the B-VARC Bulletin, February 1985, Stu Lamkin WB5IGG editor:

--- FREQUENCY CHANGE --- FREQUENCY CHANGE ---

THANKS TO JIM ARNOLD, VIC LARocca AND EVERYONE ELSE WHO HELPED..... THE NEW FREQUENCY FOR THE M.E.R.A. MACHINE IS NOW 144.870 / 145.470 MHz.

The MERA repeater has been operating on 144.870 / 145.470 MHz for over twenty years, and continues to be available for use by BVARC members and amateur radio operators in the southwest Houston metropolitan area.

RESULTS OF THE AUG. 14, 2007 BVARC AMATEUR EXAMINATION SESSION

No applicants took the test.

SPACE LIMITATIONS IN THIS NEWSLETTER - AGAIN

Due to space limitation in this issue of the newsletter, several articles had to be delayed. These include some delayed from before as well as a new one: A Geologist's View of Solar Cycles, Sunspots and Propagation. Look for these in upcoming issues. Also some formatting, compression and standard article changes were temporarily made.

Minutes of August 2nd, 2007 Board of Directors meeting of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club:

Mike Hardwick called the monthly Board of Directors meeting for The Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club to order at 7:30 PM on August 2nd, 2007 at Denny's Restaurant, 8199 SW Freeway; Houston, TX. Attending were:

Mike Hardwick, N5VCX (Pres.); Allen Brier, N5XZ (V P); Peter Sauermilch, KD5QPX (Rec. Sec.); Robert Polinski, KD5YVQ (At-Large Dir.); Bill Stone, WS5H (At-Large Dir.); Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM; Charles Frost, K5LBU; John Chauvin, K5IZO; Dave Beers, AF5T; Steve Agee, N5ZUA

- 1) Minutes for July 2007 meeting were not presented as there was no July meeting. The June 2007 meeting minutes were approved as published in the newsletter.
- 2) Treasurer's Report was not presented.
- 3) Old Business: Hamfest 2008:
 - a) Site: Sherwood secured Ft. Bend Fair Grounds with a deposit. BVARC will have three buildings; C, D, and the Sheriff's Hut.
 - b) Hardwick is editing Flyers.
 - c) Mitchell is finalizing web site.
 - d) Sauermilch is making a 2nd (and final) mailing to perspective vendors.
 - e) Board approved the purchase of two door prizes, an Icom 5000 plus a satellite capable HT with an Arrow antenna.
- 4) Schedule:
 - a) August: Ice Cream Social, Stone to coordinate.
 - b) September: Madison Jones (W5MJ) to speak on the VU7 DXpedition.
 - c) October: To Be Determined
 - d) November: Chile Supper and Board Election. Positions open are President, Recording Secretary, and At Large.
 - e) December: Homebrew
 - f) January: Banquet
 - g) February: Discovering Amateur Radio Night (New Ham)
- 5) New business:
 - a) John Moore (via Brier) commented to the board that BVARC is not now promoting itself to those new hams who pass through the examination sessions. The board authorized Chauvin to print additional newsletters so that some could be available at the examination site and more could be placed at EPO and Houston Amateur Radio Supply.
 - b) New Programs: There needs to be new programs for the club. Everyone is requested to submit ideas.
 - c) 10/10 Contest: Brier will be operating between 28.400 and 28.450. Shot new will be operating 7:00PM at 28.488 on Friday (8/3/07) and Saturday (8/4/07).
 - d) Club Callsign Requests:
 - i) Stone submitted request for KK5W for the 10/10 contest.
 - ii) Brier submitted request for W5DPA for the 10/10 contest.
 - e) Mitchell announced that club has 133 members as of 8/1/07.
 - f) Hardwick requested that everyone seek sponsors for the newsletter to help offset the cost of printing and postage.
 - g) Stone requested clarification of policies regarding reimbursement for generator gasoline used at Field Day site.
- 6) Other Business: Public Service
 - a) Tour de Pink on September 9th.
 - b) Bike around the Bay (Galveston) October 20th and 21st.
- 7) Meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM.

Submitted by Recording Secretary Peter Sauermilch, KD5QPX

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DX'ing on 160 Meters?

Part I

Larry Jacobson -- K5LJ
(with assistance from
Rick Hiller -- W5RH)



Medium Frequency Sterba Curtain

No way you say! 160 meters is the lowest frequency amateur band located just above the AM broadcast band. The name conjures large antennas, thundering static and gray haired old men from a vanished era chatting about the way things used to be, not DX'ing

Yet, 160M has shown increasing popularity with younger hams interested in a new challenge – and challenge it is! The traditional utilization of the band has been local daytime chatting with hams less than 100miles away and nighttime contacts out to a thousand or so. Now a younger generation wants to explore 160M as a new DX frontier. Can I work the world on 160M? And in a way, this harks back to the early days of amateur radio during the first part of the 20th century. In those days, these wavelengths were considered useless and amateurs were relegated to 200M and below (wavelength wise) to get them out of the way of more serious radio activities. Yet amateurs found that great distances could be worked on these shorter wavelengths. The stampede to shorter wavelengths eventually reached 20M where daytime DX all year long was possible. Now hams are returning to explore 160M as a DX band once again. This is mostly a CW effort (because of the QRN) but some DX'ing using SSB is also possible (I've worked Morocco on SSB). CW on 160M is at a more leisurely pace as are most activities on 160M – it is the 'Gentleman's Band'. One of the big new areas of experimentation is DX'ing using some of the newer digital modes – BPSK and OLIVIA.

But it is a challenge, no doubt about it! If you want to work DX on 160M, a lot of persistence, tenacity, time, and effort will be required. You will listen a lot and only occasionally hear DX. This is not for the faint of heart or those who require instant gratification. It demands a dedicated, long-term effort. What is not required is a super-extraordinary station, as many might think necessary. This is my story of a roughly 10-year effort to achieve DXCC on 160M with a modestly equipped station. More on what I mean by "modest" later.

Propagation on 160M

One main requirement for success on 160M is an understanding of the propagation on this band. 160M is not considered an HF band (such as 80-10), but as a MF (Medium Frequency) band, similar to the AM broadcast band. The propagation theories so successful on the HF bands don't work well here – they would tell you that contacts over a few thousand miles at night on this band are impossible! The predicted attenuation is way too high. Moreover, the high levels of QRN are always a problem but are somewhat reduced during the winter. On a winter's night we here on the Gulf Coast can reasonably expect to work other amateurs throughout the lower 48, lower Canada, much of the Caribbean and lands adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico on a regular basis. DX to Europe and SA will be rare but a couple openings will occur every week – maybe only for short periods (<1 hour). Africa and Asia will be less frequent and somewhat dependent on the existence of local activity in these DX locations. Japan can usually be worked once or twice a month during our sunrise. Now, I've said it – 'sunrise'. You hear a lot about 'sunrise' when the discussion of 160M DX gets going. More generally the concept of the "gray-line" is very important on 160M – the "gray-line" is the band that runs all the way around the planet at twilight (during sunrise and sunset). Stations in this gray-line zone have an enhanced likelihood of really long distance contacts especially if the other station is also in the gray-zone. Even so, being in the gray line does not guarantee a contact. Ducting, where the signal propagates along the ionosphere rather than repeated hops between ground and the F layer, appears to be the main mechanism for long distance propagation on 160. And this can be highly selective. I have worked strong DX stations easily but nearby stations more than a couple hundred miles away could not hear the DX at all! Sometimes the strength of these DX signals is almost like a local – hard to believe – but there they are. Most of the

time though, the signals are weak and undergo long, deep, slow, QSB. This is very distinctive of 160. DX'ing is best at local sunrise or the DX's sunrise although it can occur at any time of the night. When trying to work the far-east at sunrise the signals will often pop out of the noise around local sun up and persist for 30-45 minutes before fading away as the sun rises. A similar effect, at sunset, is much less obvious and less frequent.

The Station at K5LJ

Initially, I used my 80M inverted-vee for 160M. Its' center was at 50 feet and the ends drooped to about 20 feet at the ends. For 160M, I tied the feedline together and fed it as a 'T-antenna' against ground. In effect, this is a top loaded, short vertical. This was surprisingly effective. Most hams can get an 80M dipole up on a decent city lot. Later, I added elevated radials (at about 1 foot above ground, running 60 feet out either side of the base of the feed line). Finally, I installed a center loaded vertical (52 feet high) with two 65 ft long elevated radials. The center-loaded vertical seemed to work a little better than the 80M inverted-vee configured as a T- antenna. I have always used my transmitting antenna for receiving and I have never run more than 100w transmit power. Certainly running more power on 160M would help, but most of the time, if I can hear them, they can hear me – it just takes a little patience. High power would help in the big pile-ups, no doubt! Thus, a modest station setup can be effective on 160M! For the average ham who wants to get on 160M and try it out, the several wintertime contests are a great way to see how you can do. The ARRL runs a 160M CW contest during the first weekend of December. Generally, I can work all the lower 48 in that test – it is readily possible to work WAS during the contest (Hawaii and Alaska being the toughies). The CQ 160M contest in late January offers a CW and a SSB weekend. These 160M contests are much more relaxed than those on higher frequencies. The big CQ and ARRL DX contests all allow 160M contacts as well.

Other Low Band Activity

Several amateur groups have obtained experimental licenses for 500kHz (600M - ARRL has an experimental license for this frequency) and 137kHz (2200M) and are investigating long-range communications at those frequencies. Intercontinental contacts on 137kHz have been made using QRSS (very slow CW) with effective radiated power levels in the few watt range. A 'dit' lasts 1 second and a 'dash' lasts 3 seconds – now that's slow CW. As a matter-of-fact it is usually copied visually on a computer display of a short frequency scan versus time (like the waterfall display on PSK). The signal is a streak amongst the hash from noise. There is a move underway to get a standard amateur assignment at 137 kHz. Thus, there is a growing interest in exploring the lower frequencies. And why should we be surprised? The early experimenters in radio covered large distances with very primitive equipment – why shouldn't we do much better with our considerably more sophisticated gear?

Part II will continue in next month's newsletter.

THE BVARC Rag Chew Net

August, 2007 check-ins

3910 KHz +/-3KHz Wednesdays at 7:00pm, John Whiteman, K5LKJ, Net Coordinator

07/11/07 —K5LKJ, K5CEK, K5SEE, K5LOT, N5CPA, KJ5SS, KE5NDB, K5LJ, W5RH, WS5H. (10 CHECK-INS)

07/18/07—K5LKJ, K5CEK, K5LOT, W5UHZ, KJ5SS, N5CPA, K5LJ, WB5EXI, WB5PNL, W5RH, K5JWM, KE5NDB, KE5CDE, WS5H, KZ5I, K5ADA. (16 CHECK-INS)

07/25/07—K5LKJ, N5CPA, K5CEK, K5LBU, K5LOT, W5UHZ, K5LJ, K5IZO, WB5PNL, KE5NDB, WB5EXI, K5SEE, W5RH. (12 CHECK-INS)

08/01/07—K5LKJ, K5CEK, N5CPA, WS5H, W5UHZ, KE5NDB, K5SEE, W5RH, K5HFY, KJ5SS, K5JWM. (11 CHECK-INS)

08/08/07—K5LKJ, KJ5SS, WA5CYI, K5LJ, W5UHZ, N5CPA, WS5H, K5ADA, W5RH, KE5NDB, K5LBU, K5JWM, K5SEE. (13 CHECK-INS)

08/15/07—K5LKJ, K5CEK, K5HFY, KC5HFM, KJ5SS, WA5FMK, K5LJ, KE5NDB, AA5OA, KE5MQP, K5LBU, N5CPA, KC5JAR, W5UHZ, WB5PNL, WS5H, W5JSU, WB5EXI, WA5VRB, AF5T, K5ADA, KE5GWO, WA5FMK. (23 CHECK-INS)

08/22/07—K5LKJ, K5LBU, K5CEK, KJ5SS, K5LJ, N5CPA, W5UHZ, KC5JAR, KC5HFM, AD5UW, KE5NDB, K5ADA, WB5PNL, WA5CYI, AA5OA, WS5H, WB5EXI, W5RH, W5UFK. (19 CHECK-INS)

2006 Club Officers:

President:

Mike Hardwick, N5VCX
n5vcx@worldnet.att.net

Vice President:

Allen Brier, N5XZ
n5xz@ar1.net

Corresponding Secretary/Treasurer:

Sid Sherwood, N5ZKD
n5zkd@ar1.net

Recording Secretary:

Pete Sauermilch
kd5qpx@ar1.net

One Year Board Member:

Robert Polinski, KD5YVQ
polinski@swbell.net

Two Year Board Member:

Bill Stone, WS5H
dragwtow@wt.net

At Large Board Member

Rick Hiller, W5RH
rhiller@sdicgm.com

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,
See the website.

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 text of this edition.

Rag Chew Net

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

Public Service Net

Monday night on 145.47 (PL 123.0) at
8:00 PM

UPCOMING FEATURED PRESENTATIONS

September - "Fun with Transmission Lines" by Rick Hiller – W5RH

October - TBD

November - Annual Chili Supper & Annual Elections

December - Homebrew night

January - Annual banquet

February - Discovering Amateur Radio Night (& New Ham Night)

BVARC EATING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFASTS:

Otto's Bar-B-Que, 7:30 am, Fountains Shopping Center, SW
Freeway.

New York Coffee Shop, 7:30a.m., 9720 Hillcroft, in Houston.

September 21, 7:30p.m., PANDA GARDEN CHINESE
RESTAURANT. 1043 Eldridge Road at Jesse Pirtle Blvd. in Sugar
Land (1 mile +/- N. of US90A).

Upcoming Hamfests

(within 200 miles of Houston)

Hamfest info for the next few months. More information at:

<http://www.ar1.org/hamfests.html#listing>

SWAMPFEST '07

15 Sep 2007

Southwest Louisiana Amateur Repeater Club
Habibi Temple, [2928 Pack Road](#), Lake Charles, LA

Talk-In: 146.730 (with tone off)

<http://swlarclub.bravehost.com/>

HamEXPO

6 Oct 2007

Temple Amateur Radio Club
Bell County Expo Center, [301 W Loop 121](#), Belton, TX

Talk-In: 146.820 (PL 123.0)

<http://www.beltonhamexpo.org>

Brenham Swapmeet

27 Oct 2007

Brenham Amateur Radio Club
Washington County Fairgrounds, [1303 East Blue Bell Road](#), Brenham, TX

Talk-In: 147.260 +600 (PL 103.5)

<http://www.alpha1.net/~w5aum>

Ninth Annual Coastal Bend Hamfest

10 Nov 2007

South Texas Amateur Radio Club
Hilltop Community Center, [11423 Leopard Street](#), Corpus Christi, TX

Talk-In: 146.82 -600 (PL 107.2)

<http://www.n5scrp.org>



Monthly Publication of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club.
Serving Amateur Radio for Southwest Houston and Fort Bend County
Club Call sign – KK5W
BVARC Website: <http://www.bvarc.org>
Editor: John Chauvin, K5IZO, k5izo@yahoo.com
Production Team: Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM, k5cam@arrl.net
Claude Sessions, K5HFY, k5hfy@arrl.net

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 area. BVARC is a Non-Profit Corporation classified by IRS as 501-(c)-(3).

Today **BVARC** is truly a general interest amateur radio club 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. 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 p.m. on the 145.47 (minus offset, PL 123 tone) repeater & a rag chew net is held each Wednesday at 7 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 or see the BVARC website: www.bvarc.org

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**BRAZOS VALLEY
AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
P.O. BOX 2997
SUGAR LAND, TX 77487-2997
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

**BVARC Monthly Meeting Meeting "Fun With Transmission Lines" –
Thursday, September 13, 2007**

*If your mailing label is
highlighted in color, it's time
to renew your membership!*