



BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

JANUARY 2010

VOLUME 34 ISSUE 1

ANNUAL BVARC BANQUET

The BVARC Annual Banquet takes place on January 16. This year there are some changes. It will be held at the Texas Land & Cattle Steak House. The amount to members will be \$20. BVARC will subsidize this event as the actual amount, with gratuities, will come out to nearly \$30 BUT BVARC PAYS the difference so each member will only be charged \$20 flat.

See the details on the inside of this newsletter.

Note: The banquet is in-lieu of the monthly meeting. There is no meeting this month.



Homebrew Brew Night - December Meeting

We had a great turn out of both Homebrewers and Homebrewing viewers at our December meeting. Club members Dave, W5FZ, brought some home made Morse keys; Bill, WS5H, did his routine on rotator repair to the delight of all; Mike, AC0TX, talked about adapting commercial gear, Larry, K5LJ, showed us his solid state HF amplifier he recently completed and Paul, N8NOV had some Elecraft kits to show off. Excellent Gents, a big thank you from the peanut gallery. Other non-members showed QRP gear and various widgets, including a 10 meter quad and a metal light pole resonator/matching network.

So, get busy with your homebrew project in preparation for showing it at our 2010 Homebrew night on December 9th, a short 11 months away.



Presidents Corner

by Rick Hiller – W5RH

BVARC – Who We Are

Welcome to BVARC 2010. Happy New Year to all. The club had an eventful 2009 with all of the activities – meetings, eating and field events, etc. Let's strive to continue the momentum.

With the New Year comes new officers. Peter Sauermilch, KD5QPX, has re-up'd for the Recording Secretary; Ross Lawler, W5HFF, is At Large BOD 2 year seat; Charlie Frost, K5LBV, is now in the Past Presidents Board seat (vacated by Mike Hardwick, N5VCX) and, of course, Arnold Knoche, K5ADA, remains Treasurer and David Barber, K5NDB, is BOD At Large 1 year. I was elected President, and since I was VP, and it was not a VP election year, the board unanimously appointed Kirk Kendrick, KK2Z, to the position (with his approval, of course). A large THANK YOU to all of these fine folks for stepping forward and thank you, especially to, Charles "Frosty" Frost for his 2 years at the helm. Please, thank all of these members, as they are the folks that keep this club running at the top level.

Some other members who hold position of responsibility and that deserved to be thanked are John Moore, KK5NU, and his VEC crew - Larry Jacobson, K5LJ, Dennis Dietrich, W5DDD, George Ontko, KM5VP, Jeff Fussell, KD5VGE and Robert Trahan, KE5ZPJ. Also, Sid Sherwood, N5ZKD, and his Public Information Net crew of Bill Stone, WS5H, Pete Sauermilch, KD5QPX and Cam Mitchell, K5CAM. Thank John Whiteman, K5LKJ, and Sam Wilson, N5CPA, for running the Wed Rag Chew Net. Thank Cam Mitchell, K5CAM and Eddie Runner, NU5K, for the new web page. Thank Sam Wilson, N5CPA, for religiously talking about eating. Who knows when some newcomer will pop up and want to know where and when to eat. Thank John Chauvin, K5IZO, who compiles and edits our monthly newsletter. Thank Cam Mitchell, K5CAM and Claude Sessions, K5HFF, for folding, labeling and posting the 120 + newsletters mailed every month. And thank Bill Stone, WS5H, who coordinates the a local Hospital Emcomm Digi-peater and the Museum Ships weekend. Thank Jim Burrough, N5DTT, for putting club contacts in the LoTW database. Thank Bruce Paige, KK5DO, for monitoring the BVARC reflector. Thank Randy Pollard, AK5G, for reviewing our accounting books and assisting with tax returns, etc. When you see these folks tell them 'thanks' please. To the others I may have forgotten; like the folks that set up the chairs and tables at the meeting, even if you only do one or two - Thank YOU!

From the above list you can see that a lot of folks willingly give of their time and muscle to make BVARC what it is. Not all tasks are "Ham Radio", but it takes a plethora of talents to run this great club. So, in 2010, please, step up and volunteer some time or effort of some type, no matter how small. Your time and effort will be appreciated. Participate in the weekly net events on VHF and HF, and take part in the fun outside events like the Greater Houston Ham Fest in March, Museum Ships Weekend in June, ARRL Field Day, BSA Jamboree on the Air.

For all you newcomers to the club or neophytes to Ham Radio – WELCOME. As they say, "jump in the water's fine". Ham Radio really is more fun if you do it as a group activity. Please come out and have some fun at our events. Set up, operate, cook, log, eat or tear down. If you don't know how to get on the air or build an antenna, just ask – PLEASE. There are over 100 "ELMERS" in this club and everyone of them are willing to assist you in some way. Some with verbal knowledge and some with muscle to help you hang an antenna, for example. However, Elmers are not mind readers, you have to ask. If you don't know anyone in the club, introduce yourself to the guy that runs the meeting – me. I'll help you with anything Ham Radio-wise and if it is something I don't know about (digital modes for one) I will find someone to mentor you. Ham Radio is about having fun with radio, learning about radio communication and the electronics technology that enables it. Yes, there are serious sides to the hobby like disaster operations and public service events, but even that can be fun. It is all about learning and expanding your knowledge of radio, propagation, operational skills and electronics.

One last thing. My door is always open – meaning, you can email me rhiller@sdicgm.com or call my cell -832-474-3713 anytime. If I cannot talk, as I run a business, leave a message, I will get back to you. Good, bad or indifferent, I want to hear what you have to say. I want you to enjoy this hobby like the other members of this club. My path in Ham Radio started with a friend's Dick Tracey Wrist Radio toy when I was in 4th grade. I remember the moment very well. I want you to remember "your" moment in Ham Radio. BVARC is here to assist with that.

Oh yes, thank you for electing me as President for 2010 and 2011. I sincerely appreciate it. I look forward to serving you well. 73, Rick – W5RH

BVARC Annual Banquet – Saturday, January 16, 2010

Texas Land and Cattle restaurant in the Fountains on Hwy 59 in Stafford will be the venue for the BVARC Annual Banquet. We welcome all members and their guests for a fun filled social evening. Cost for each attending member is a 'club subsidized' \$20, one guest is also invited per member at the \$20 meal rate. Any non-members and those guests beyond the 1 per member will be charged \$30.77. See the menu below for details on the food choices available. Please, RSVP before January 8th at 5PM to Arnold K5ADA jakadaok@aol.com or Rick W5RH rhiller@sdicgm.com

Note: All member and guest meal fees must be paid to BVARC before entering the banquet. These fees can be paid by mail (received by January 8th) or, better yet, at the door the night of the event.

Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club -- Annual Banquet
Saturday -- January 16, 2010 6:30 PM
Texas Land & Cattle Steak House
Cattlebaron Room
12710 Southwest Freeway (The Fountains)
Stafford, Texas 77477

Four course menu- choice of one for each course:

- Salad:

Spicy Caesar
House Salad

- Entrees:

12 oz. Ribeye - flavorful aged choice, hand-cut steak with the most marbling
Grilled chicken & shrimp- 6 oz. chicken breast and four shrimp, both lightly seasoned and Mesquite grilled
Garlic steak & shrimp- 6 oz. sirloin topped with roasted garlic butter and paired with four shrimp (grilled or fried)

- Sides:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Garlic mashed potatoes | Steamed vegetables |
| Crispy shoestring fries | Roasted butter corn |
| Ranch house beans | Sautéed mushrooms |

- Dessert:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| B-Bar-A brownie | Peach bread pudding |
| Bourbon pecan pie | Lemon bar |
| Chisholm Trail cheesecake | Vanilla ice cream |

Package includes fresh baked bread, soft drinks or iced tea and coffee service.

\$20 per person (includes sales tax and gratuity)

CASH BAR AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.



Monday Night NET Updates

Don't forget the Monday Night Public Service Net starts at **8 pm** on 146.94 (167.9). 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:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 9/14 - 23 - Randy, aa5oa+ws5h | 10/19 - 10 - Rick, w5rh10/26 - 17 - | 11/23 - 17 - Pete, kd5qpx |
| 9/21 - 0 - no net control | Pete, kd5qpx | 11/30 - 21 - Pete, kd5qpx |
| 9/28 - 26 - pete, kd5qpx | 11/2 - 18 - Cam, k5cam | 12/7 - 31 - Cam, k5cam |
| 10/5 - 22 - Cam, k5cam | 11/9 - 21 - Sid, n5zkd | 12/14 - 31 - Bill, ws5h |
| 10/12 - 24 - Bill, ws5h | 11/16 - 15 - Rick, w5rh | 12/21 - 13 - Cam, k5cam |

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Eddie Runner Jr. - KB5OBB

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Support your local HAM RADIO Club



BVARC GREATER HOUSTON HAMFEST

Saturday, March 6, 2010
Ft. Bend County Fairgrounds

We are less than 3 months from the BVARC GREATER HOUSTON HAMFEST.

There are many changes this year. Some of these are:

Real time on-line table selection and payment.

A revamped website. Check it out at www.houstonhamfest.org or go to the BVARC website for a link.

Once again, we expect to be appointed the ARRL South Texas Section Convention. As usual, we will have a raffle, an array of speakers included a featured speaker, door prizes, including a significant grand prize, food, ham radio license testing, tailgate sellers, emergency vehicles, DXCC checking, ham information table, a live HF station, organization tables such as ARRL, AMSAT, etc. and of course the swap meet. We believe that we are the second largest hamfest in Texas.

This is the most personnel intensive BVARC activity of the whole year. Try to help in any way that you are physically capable of. Contact either Rick Hiller, W5RH at rhiller@sdicgm.com or John Chauvin, K5IZO at k5izo@yahoo.com

We look forward to another successful hamfest.





Blame it on 'IZO'—the MFJ Antenna Analyzer Dilemma
By Rick Hiller – W5RH

Up on the House Top

So there we were, up on K5IZO's roof on a rainy afternoon, tearing apart the balun coupled feed point of his 80 meter loop. Directly connected to the antenna, we were getting an R (resistive value) of "0" on the MFJ 269 Antenna Analyzer. X (reactive value) read 37. Before hand, I had modeled his loop with EZNEC and found that it was so close to the ground (wavelength wise) that the radiation resistance was pretty low. So, on 160 meters, where we were trying to 'force' it to work, the modeled Radiation Resistance was even lower -- 10 ohms or less.

John (K5IZO) had put up this semi-horizontal loop to get on 80 meters....fitting a large loop like that on the typical Meyerland/ Sharpstown house lot was an undertaking reminiscent of the art of origami....slanting, folding and zig-zagging were the name of the game. So this loop had no purposeful shape or radiation characteristic, it was, known intuitively to be, close to resonance on 80 meters, due to the fact that it had the proper amount of wire.

I had mentioned to John, a few weeks back, that a closed, 1 wavelength long, resonant loop could be used on a frequency that was half of the fundamental frequency. You can use a 40 meter loop on 80, like I do, or use an 80 meter loop on 160, as John wanted to. All you have to do is open it up at the proper point and the feed z obtained on the half fundamental frequency would be "reasonable". You do have to 'tune' the system (antenna and feeder), but it would work. (I do it every Wednesday evening for the Rag Chew Net). Unfortunately, so far this day, John, was questioning my theory....and I didn't blame him...I was questioning my theory too, and I had a "working" 40/80 meter loop at home.

So, with the MFJ-269 providing a confusing impedance reading of $R = 0$ and $X = 37$, and nothing we could do would change it – we quit. With my tail between legs and scratching my head, I departed. Down, but not defeated, I trudged onward thru the fog.

Visit www.bvarc.org "Tech Articles" for the complete story and solution to the mystery, it just might astound you what I found out. Enjoy. Rick – W5RH



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BVARC Historical Vignettes – The Ding Dong Net
Allen Mattis N5AFV, Club Historian

A question was recently asked over the MERA 145.47 MHz repeater during the daily commute by a relatively new HF operator. The operator was looking for an HF net he could check in to that evening but no one in the group at the time knew of a local HF that evening. Such was not always the case in Houston. A previous historical vignette related the history of BVARC’s HF nets, but there was also an unofficial HF net that was held every evening with four to eight check-ins, most of whom were BVARC members.

This unofficial HF net began to meet in late 1990 on a frequency of 7.260 MHz at 8 PM. The net was an informal discussion or old fashioned “rag chew” with almost any topic being fair game. Almost every evening at about 8:55 PM the net was interrupted by interval signals transmitted from an international short wave broadcast station. The 40m band was shared with international broadcast stations, and many of these stations began to send interval signals five minutes before they came on the air. These interval signals allow listeners to find the correct frequency before their broadcast begins. Many international broadcast stations have distinctive interval signals and this station used a chime or bell that made a “ding dong” sound. The net soon became known as the Ding Dong Net and when the interval signal came on it was time to close the net.

The founder of the Ding Dong Net was Lou Kronberg, W5IHY, and Lou went so far as to have certificates printed that amateur radio operators could obtain after checking in to the net. These certificates proudly certified that the recipient was a member of the Ding Dong Net. Lou was very active on the HF bands, and he was also the recipient of the BVARC Loop and Zepp Award in 1994. Lou Kronberg, W5IHY, became a silent key on November 14, 2002.

After a while the net participants grew tired of the QRM from international broadcast stations and moved the net to the 75m band on a frequency of 3.960 MHz. In the winter months the net would meet on the 160m band on a frequency of 1.882 MHz. Despite these moves to other bands, the net continued to be called the Ding Dong Net. Some of the frequent net participants were Lou Kronberg, W5IHY, Bill Todd-Brown, N5MPN, Henry Morrison, W5RIY, Charlie Prochaska, KG5KV, and Sam Wilson, N5CPA. Regular check-ins from out-of-town were Gene Heath, K5JHN, from Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Jim Nash, N5OAC, from Waco, Texas.

The Ding Dong Net continued to meet through 1998. But after an eight-year run, net participation had gradually dwindled and the net faded away. It was always nice to be able to check in to the Ding Dong Net and find friends to talk to in the evening on the HF bands.



Public Service Events Coming Up

Mike Hardwick, N5VCX

| | | | | |
|---|--------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Houston Marathon – Houston | 1-17-2010 | Downtown Houston | Carl Hacker | 713-500-9185 |
| Frost Bike | 1-?-2010 | FM1960/Hwy 290 | Mike Hardwick | 713-826-6917 |
| B-geO Magnolia Miles Bike Ride – Magnolia | 3-20-2010 | Tomball/FM2920 | George Obrien | 202-552-1760 |
| BP MS150 – Houston to Austin | 4-17/18-2010 | Hwy 6/Interstate 10 | Mike Hardwick | 713-826-6917 |



Minutes of the December, 2009 Board of Directors meeting of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club:

Charles Frost called the monthly Board of Directors meeting for the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club to order at 7:05 PM on December 2009 at Fudrucker's, 11445 Fountain Lake Drive, Stafford, TX. Attending were: Charles Frost, K5LBU; (Pres.); Peter Sauermilch, KD5QPX (Rec. Sec.); David Barber, K5NDB, (At-Large Dir.); Rick Hiller, W5RH (VP); Mike Hardwick, N5VCX (Past Pres.); Ross Lawler, W5HFF (At-Large Dir.); Bill Stone, WS5H; Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM; Eddie Runner, NU5K.

- 1) Minutes for the November 2009 meeting were approved as distributed to the board through email.
- 2) Treasurer's Report was approved as distributed to the board through email.
- 3) Business:
 - a) Awards Banquet: One nomination has been received for the Loop & Zepp. Additional nominations will hopefully be received from the general membership at the December 10th meeting.
 - b) General Membership Meeting Programs:
 - i) Hiller reported that "Pump Handle" Fawcette plans to bring a RC Helicopter and expert pilot to the December 10th Meeting, Home Brew Night.
 - ii) Future meeting topics:
 - (1) Hiller reported that the DX-Expedition DVD costs \$20 and runs several hours. This could be used for elements of several meetings in 2010.
 - (2) Hiller reported that he and Barber plan to present a discussion on Linear Amplifiers on either March or April 2010 at the discretion of the new Vice President.
 - c) Vice President (VP) board position: Hiller confirmed that Kirk Kendrick agreed to fill the remaining term of the VP position that resulted from Hiller being elected president. A motion was made and approved that Kendrick is to be the Vice President, pending his continued willingness to do so, when Hiller resigns the VP position in January 2010.
 - d) Museum Ship Weekend: BVARC received two certificates of participation from The Battleship New Jersey Amateur Radio Station. Hiller is replicating the certificate that goes to the individual operators for participation.
 - e) Greater Houston Hamfest (GHH) March 6th 2010: We have a guest speaker, Dan Harrison, from the ARRL. The GHH will also be the South Texas Section Convention for 2010.
- 4) Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Submitted by Recording Secretary, Peter Sauermilch, KD5QPX



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George DiLetto KD0RW



RESULTS OF THE December 8th BVARC AMATEUR EXAMINATION SESSION
By: John Moore, KK5NU

B-VARC sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examination session that was held on Tuesday, December 8, 2009 at HCC's Scarcella Technology & Science Building here in Stafford.

MEMBERS OF THE VE TEAM:

Dennis Dietrich, W5DDD
Jeff Fussell, KD5VGE
John Moore, KK5NU
George Ontko, KM5VP

Six examination elements were administered during the evening to five applicants. One new Technician class license and an upgrade to General class were attained; with the total number of elements passed being 2. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was 33.33%.

Congratulations to the following who attained a license and/or passed an exam:

| | | |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Edward T. Fogarty | - {KF5EIG} | - Technician |
| William W. Kelly | - KC5ETX | - General |

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 everyone at HCC Scarcella Technology & Science Building for making these excellent classroom facilities available to us for our exams each month.

..... 73



THE BVARC Rag Chew Net

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

As this goes to press, this information is not available. Look for this information in the next issue.



NO MEETING THIS MONTH.

The Annual Banquet is held in-lieu of the monthly meeting. See you there!



2010 Club Officers:

President:

Rick Hiller

rhiller@sdicgm.com

Vice President:

Kirk Kendrick, KK2Z

kmkendrick@gmail.com

Corresponding Secretary/Treasurer:

Arnold Knoche, K5ADA

jakadaok@aol.com

Recording Secretary:

Pete Sauermilch, KD5QPX

kd5qpx@arrl.net

Board Member:

David Barber, K5NDB

d_barber@att.net

Board Member:

Ross Lawler, W5HFF

w5hff@yahoo.com

At Large Board Member

(Past President):

Charles "Frosty" Frost, K5LBU

frosty1@pdq.net

Club Happenings:

General Meeting

Second Thursday each month, 7:30 PM

Sugar Land Community Center,

226 Matlage Way

Board of Directors Meeting

First Thursday of each month, 7:00 PM

Fuddruckers, just South of the Fountains

Shopping Center on US 59 outbound..

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

jwm@hal-pc.org

Eating Schedule

Saturday morning breakfasts

Third Thursday dinner at 7:00 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 146.94 (PL 167.9) at

8:00 PM

BVARC EATING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

59 DINER, 7:30a.m., SW Freeway outbound service road,
near Kirkwood.

NEW YORK COFFEE & BAGEL SHOP, 7:30A.M., 9720
Hillcroft.

THIRD THURSDAY/FRIDAY DINNER – None in January.

BVARC ANNUAL BANQUET – See details elsewhere in this
newsletter.

OTHER HAM GROUPS:

WEDNESDAYS – WEDNESDAY LUNCH BUNCH---(Note new
location)

LUBY'S CAFETERIA, 10:30a.m. to 12:00Noon +, 9797
South Post Oak Road, just south of the I-610 Loop in Meyer
Park Shopping Center.

WEDNESDAYS – AMSAT & QRP GROUP

PAPPAS BARBECUE. 11:30a.m., SW corner Westheimer &
Gessner.



Hamfests

(within 200 miles of Houston)

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

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

San Antonio 2010 Amateur Radio Fiesta, 23 Jan 2010

San Antonio Radio Club

Knights of Columbus Hall

509 Schertz Parkway, Shertz, TX

<http://w5sc.org>

Talk-In: 146.940- (PL 179.9)

Greater Houston Hamfest, 6 March, 2010

Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

ARRL South Texas Section Convention

Ft. Bend County Fairgrounds, Rosenberg, TX

www.houstonhnamfest.org

Talk-In: 146.940 minus offset (PL 167.9)

ARRL Louisiana State Convention (50th Acadiana Hamfest), 12-13 Mar 2010

Acadiana Amaterur Radio Association, Inc.

[300 Frog Festival Drive](http://www.w5ddl.org/hamfest/index.htm), Rayne Civic Center, Rayne, LA

<http://www.w5ddl.org/hamfest/index.htm>

Talk-In: 146.82 (no PL tone)





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@arri.net
Claude Sessions, K5HFY, k5hfy@arri.net

Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club (BVARC) was organized in 1977, 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 7:00 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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JANUARY 2010

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

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

Annual Banquet – Saturday, January 16, 2010 – 6:30 PM

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