



BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

JUNE 2012

VOLUME 36 ISSUE 6

BVARC June GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

7:30 PM, Thursday, June 14, 2012

234 Matlage Way, Imperial Park Recreation Center, Sugar Land, Texas

A Beginner's Guide to FCC Amateur Radio Enforcement

The June BVARC General Membership meeting continues our series of meetings for "New Hams" with Steve Lee of the FCC's Houston Office talking about local enforcement, the equipment used, and some of the experiences he has had. Come see the special vehicle and equipment it takes to make this job possible.

REMEMBER – For June, BVARC has several events occurring:

- **June 2-3 Museum Ships Weekend!**
See the article later in this issue or contact Ron K5HM for more details
- **June 14 General Membership Meeting!**
- **June 23-24 Field Day Weekend!**
See the article later in this issue or contact Matt K5NGU for more details



May Meeting Report

The May meeting was targeted at "Antenna Systems for the Recently Licensed Ham" by Tom, W5TOM, Pete, KD5QPX and Rick, W5RH

The talks helped us all (no-code Hams as well as those that started as Novices) learn about the cardinal rules of antenna systems and the foundation knowledge of antenna system design from W5RH. Rick presented the rules and knowledge to build a solid antenna system. Tom W5TOM showed his simple, yet effective and efficient installations; Then, Pete KD5QPX showed simple antennas (mostly homebrew) that work well and are easily deployed.

- W5RH – Understanding the Cardinal Rules of The Ham Radio Antenna System -- What makes up the "system" and why is it a system.
- W5TOM – Utilizing Your New Found Practical Antenna System Knowledge -- The perils, pitfalls and perks of a real installation.
- KD5QPX – Deploying Simple Antennas – simply built, easily deployed, these antennas perform well.

The President's Corner

President's Corner

By Kirk Kendrick – KK2Z

QST...QST...QST...

The weather is heating up...and lots of us are working on our antennas. The May meeting encouraged many people to get out and “try something new” with their antenna systems. With Museum Ships Weekend and ARRL Field Day coming up in June, we all have the chance to not only erect portable antennas using some of the guiding principles we learned but to actually get on the air and operate!

John K5IZO and I have now built 4 pneumatic antenna launchers (similar to the one shown at the May meeting) to quickly put wires in the top of the tallest trees...at least to the top of your normal Texas tall trees up to 100' tall. Of course, having a set of stairs to climb to the top of 3 story buildings (such as the tower at Field Day) is ALMOST as easy!

I was lucky enough to have the weekend off to attend Fish Fest 2012 with a bunch of the Balloon Launch Team enthusiasts. We launched 2 balloons from a boat on Lake Livingston that sported new ultra-lightweight APRS packages built by BVARC's Thomas KT5TK and Andy W5ACM. Thomas has spent a lot of time designing circuit boards, updating his Atmel “trackuino” code, and testing his frequency agile tiny APRS packages. New designs and more testing are in store before the August BLT launch.

How can you get on the air and get active with BVARC?? Contact the co-chairmen of our upcoming Museum Ships Weekend and Field Day events! Let them know how you can help and when you'll be there to (eat and) operate!

- Museum Ships Weekend – First full weekend in June
Contact Ron K5HM or Bob N5JSL.
- Field Day 2012 – the Last full weekend in June
Contact Frostie K5LBU or Matt Tatro

Get on the Air with BVARC!
73 de Kirk KK2Z



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:

2/13 - 39 - Clint, kf5hdf
2/20 - 26 - Dwayne, kb5yta
2/27 - 38 - Pete, kd5qpx
3/5 - 47 - Cam, k5cam
3/12 - 32 - Clint, kf5hdf

3/19 - - Dwayne, kb5yta
3/26 - 32 - Pete, kd5qpx
4/2 - 31 - Cam, k5cam
4/9 - 42 - Clint, kf5hdf
4/16 - 31 - Dwayne, kb5yta

4/23 - 43 - Pete, kd5qpx
4/30 - 36 - Pete, kd5qpx
5/7 - 39 - Cam, k5cam
5/12 - 41 - Bill, ws5h
5/17 - 31 - Dwayne, kb5yta

MSWE 2012

June 2 0000Z (June 1 1900 Central) – June 3 2359Z (June 3 1659 Central)
Seawolf Park , Galveston , Tx

Museum Ships Weekend! 2012 Approaching!

Ahoy all Swabs and Swabettes . . . and regular folks too. In less than 7 days, this year's event will be upon us. This year's event is again sponsored by River Oaks Car Stereo and Eddie Runner, NU5K. Eddie will be providing lunch on Saturday to the operators. Thanks Eddie.

In case you have been living under a rock, the dates are June 2-June 3. We will be setting up antennas and radio rooms on Friday June 1st starting around 1 PM. If you can assist, please drop by.

In honor of the fifth consecutive year of club participation in MSWE, BVARC is sponsoring a special Texas Navy Certificate for those operators world wide, who submit proof of contacting all five of the Texas Museum Ships. This is in addition to our regular QSL program.

Think the certificate will be tough to earn? NOT! You might be able to work four of the five Texas Navy ships during one of two VHF nets we will have on the 146.94 repeater. These will be held on Saturday (1 to 2 PM Local) and Sunday (10 to 11 am Local). Check the BVARC website for repeater offset and tone). Net Control will be Jerry Mueller, KF5EYC.

All the sponsoring clubs are participating in the certificate program by sharing their logs with us so we can authenticate those who apply. This is a good time to mention them; the Battleship Texas Amateur Radio Station, Tidelands Amateur Radio Society and the South Texas Amateur Radio Club.

At present there are 92 ships committed to participate in MSWE this year. That is up from last year's total.

We'll be at our usual operating location, Seawolf Park in Galveston. Its not hard to find. There is a map on the website at <http://www.bvarc.org/index.php?page=ms> . If maps are not your thing, just head down I-45 go over the big bridge, follow the signs to Seawolf Park. If you hit seawater, you've gone too far.

There are over 50 BVARC'ers who signed up to operate and participate. If you signed up in advance you will be admitted to Seawolf Park Free. Otherwise, you may have to pay a nominal admission fee.

We'll have one operating position in each ship radio room plus two stations in a picnic shelter in the PARK. There should be plenty of opportunity for you to operate. So Come on down.

At present we are short one radio. Or an auto tuner compatible with the IC-7000. So if you have one you are willing to let us have, I promise we will take good care of it. Help if you can.

73, Ron



THE BVARC Rag Chew Net

May check-ins

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

04/25/12, K5LKJ (NCS), K5CEK, K5CAM, W5TKZ, K5NDB, N5CPA, K5DLL (Deer Park), KE5OBY (T), K5LJ, WA5CYI, WS5H, AF5T, AA5OA, K5IZO, K0NM, AA0ST (Friendswood), W5RH, KE5EYQ (Denham Springs, LA), AE5YY, KF5FNP (Carencro, LA), KC5JAR (Katy). (21 Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 134, SN = 134, A = 35, K = 4

05/02/12, K5LKJ (NCS), K5CEK, N5CPA, AF5T, W5TKZ, K5LJ, AA5OA, K5DLL (Deer Park), K5NDB, N5DTT, K5IZO, W5TOM, AA0ST (Friendswood), KE5OBY (T), W5RH, KC5JAR (Katy)(R), WS5H (R), KE5NDN (R), (18 Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 110, SN = 99, A = 4, K = 1

05/09/12, K5LKJ (NCS), K5CEK, K5CAM (Cat Spring), W5TKZ, K5DLL (Deer Park), K0NM, WS5H, AA5OA (T), K5NDB, K5LJ, WA5CYI, K5IZO, N5CPA, K5LBU, AF5T, W5TOM, KJ5SS (San Angelo), N5VCI, AA0ST (Friendswood), W5DPT, KE5OBY (T), KC5JAR (Katy). (22 Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 123, SN = 90, A = 9, K = 3

05/16/12, K5LKJ (NCS), K5CEK, K5DLL (Deer Park), WS5H, AF5T, W5TKZ, AA0ST (Friendswood), N5CPA, K5LJ, K5NDB, W5TOM, K5IZO/5 (R), KE5OBY (R), WA5CYI, N5DTT, K5YZS (Spring), AA5OA (T), W5RH, K0NM, KC5JAR (Katy), KJ5SS (San Angelo), N5RXK (Hammond, LA). (22 Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 129, SN = 125, A = 5, K = 2

(M) = mobile (P) = Portable (R) = Relay (T) = telephone check-in

Thanks. Regards. _ John C. Whiteman, K5LKJ

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Skeeters Ball Game – June 9

Join your fellow BVARCers at a Skeeters baseball game. The Skeeters is the new minor league baseball team located in Sugar Land, by the sugar mill, not far from our meeting location. They have a brand new stadium which apparently is a sight to behold. Go to their website for more information at: <http://sugarlandskeeters.com/>

Art, KE5OBY has secured a block of 20 seats for June 9, 7:05 PM. Tickets are \$12 payable to Art. His contact info is on the BVARC website.



BVARC CW Net Tuesday 7PM 3.550 MHz

(mostly under 15 WPM, but you send at any speed you desire to send)

Join us for a fun filled 30 to 45 minutes of working the CW mode. We welcome new folks with open ears, so join us. Net is transmitted at 11/15 WPM Farnsworth spacing, so it is easy to copy. The net structure is just like the Rag Chew Net on Wednesday nights. NCS sends the QST pre-amble and calls for check-ins “QNI?”.... after listing the checkins, each station is then called individually by NCS with “QTT” to invite them to transmit a short greeting or message.

Net Control Station (NCS) is Rick, W5RH, but some nights WS5H, Bill, or Roy, W5TKZ, take over, so listen carefully right at 7 PM. Frequency is on 3550 KHz (+/- 3 KHz pending QRM).

Listen to a sample pre-amble (mp3) on the CW Net web page at <http://bvarc.org/index.php?page=cwnet>

Just have a listen or join in, but do get on the air and have some fun with the original digital mode.

Field Day, June 23 and 24. Richmond Fire Training Facility.

Field Day is an annual [amateur radio](#) exercise, widely sponsored by [IARU](#) regions and member organizations, encouraging [emergency communications](#) preparedness among [amateur radio operators](#). In the United States, it is typically the largest single emergency preparedness exercise in the country, with over 30,000 operators participating each year.

Since the first ARRL Field Day in 1933, radio amateurs throughout [North America](#) have practiced the rapid deployment of radio communications equipment in environments ranging from operations under tents in remote areas to operations inside [Emergency Operations Centers](#) (EOCs). Operations using emergency and alternative power sources are highly encouraged, since electricity and other public infrastructures are often among the first to fail during a [natural disaster](#) or [severe weather](#).

To determine the effectiveness of the exercise and of each participant's operations, there is an integrated [contesting](#) component, and many clubs also engage in concurrent leisure activities (camping out, cookouts, etc.). Operations typically last a continuous twenty-four hours, requiring scheduled relief operators to keep stations on the air. Additional contest points are awarded for experimenting with unusual modes, making contacts via satellite, and involving youth in the activity. **Source (Wikipedia)**

This year's field day for BVARC will be on June 23rd and 24th at the Richmond Fire Training Facility, thanks to Dennis and others making this possible. As the above quote from Wikipedia mentions field was started in 1933 and is the largest emergency preparedness exercise in the country. A skill we all hope we will never need but a skill some of us have had to use in the past. We acquire these skills by participating in the field days every year, setting up the generators, antennas, cables, power supplies and rigs. Operating for extended periods of times and trying to make as many contacts within the U.S. as possible with other field day stations.

There is of course a whole part to field day – a very different part. Field day not only promotes the emergency component and the competition, but also QRP (low power communications), GOTA (Get On The Air) for new Hams, alternative energy for transmission, such as solar or wind generated power and satellite operations. For many club members and guests in particular, this will be the first time they see these different operating modes, have actually setup an antenna, used only generator power to operate a station or have met some of the club members they speak to on their daily commute using the repeater.

Field day is the one time a year club members can actually support the efforts of field day in many ways and gain some valuable experience in the process. Field is completely self-organized by BVARC and relies on us only to make the event happen. Take this opportunity to operate on HF or VHF, CW, SSB, FM or other modes, especially during the overnight hours when some of the bands are generally at their best.

Many of the members that will be at field day have many years of experience in our great hobby and are more than willing to share their knowledge with us new hams.

Our field day will start promptly at 1PM on Saturday, June 23rd and will hopefully continue without interruption for 24 hours. We will be cooking a great BBQ dinner on Saturday (details to follow) and club members and their guests are invited. We still need operators, help with setup on Friday after 4PM, setup starting Saturday at 7AM and teardown Sunday after 1PM. We can of course always use donations for food, drinks and other items that are needed as well, but most of all please take the time to come to the field day and share in this unique yearly event.

Please contact Matt Tatro, K5NGU (matttatro@gmail.com) directly if you feel the urge to help – many do and nobody should be disappointed.



DAYTON HAMVENTION 2012

By, Scott McKee, NT5SM

Dayton, Dayton, what is all the fuss about. I've been part of this ham community for 40 years and had never been to the Dayton Hamvention that's held every year in May. Thanks to some lucky planning with my work schedule, I finally had a chance to go.

Early the Thursday morning before, I headed out to the airport to give me a reasonable chance of getting there at a decent time. As I was on my way, and what I didn't expect, was for the Hamvention to begin even before I arrived in Dayton. When seated for the flight, I came to realize that I was surrounded by fellow hams also enroute to ham mecca. It was a giant eyeball QSO party with plenty of DX in the mix.

Finally arriving at the Dayton Airport, there were many folks with HT's around the terminal. Some were hams that had planned a rendezvous or perhaps a pick-up entourage for some of the VIP attendees. After I picked up my rent car, I decided to swing by the Hara Arena to get an overview and plan my arrival for the morning. My phone's GPS got me there without any problem, but I was amazed at the sight. Trucks, vans, trailers, motorhomes were everywhere – all bringing their wares into the arena or setting up in the flea market area. One car passing by even had a familiar call plate; it was K9EID belonging to Bob Heil of Heil Sound.

The next morning had to start early as the entry to the flea market opened at 8am, but my hotel was 30 miles to the south due to my late booking. To my surprise I was not alone as there were Mag mounts, Screwdrivers, and other antenna's scattered throughout the parking lot. The talk-in repeater and .52 were full of activity and the APRS radio was beeping on overload. Parking was well organized with either free parking at a mall with a paid shuttle service or paid parking in a field across from the Arena. I chose the latter.

First I came to the sea of what is known as the flea market, I quickly became engulfed by the bargain hunters seeking to find the deal of the century to take back home. Much of it was a walk through amateur radio history. One vendor looked like a Heathkit Amateur Radio catalog from the early 1970's. There were license plates represented there that could qualify you for Worked All States. While walking around, I also had the privilege to meet briefly with Ted Leatherland, W4DUF. He is Terry, K5PGF's dad.

As 9am approached, I worked my way back to one of the entry points to the inside complex. The crowd was gathering just outside the arena in a ticketing area. At opening time, we weren't yet allowed passage into the Arena. I was having flashbacks of the crowds trying to enter the venue of a major rock and roll concert during the late 70's. It's the same crowd but now we're a few years older.

Dayton truly requires a significant competence in time-schedule management. Our hobby offers many different facets for us to explore and chances are good that at Dayton there will be a forum that addresses your interest. The problem – there will be time conflicts and you have to make choices. This is best done BEFORE you get there but distractions will likely still cause you to make adjustments.

As you enter the floor of the Arena, it's just like opening your favorite ham radio magazine that has just come to life, plus the other readers are there with you as well. In other words, there are lots of people trying to see the same thing as you, at the very same time. A true case of sensory overload. The new stuff was great, but also demanded the most patience.

My schedule was filled about 75% in the forums, will the greatest impact for me being the 3 hour Youth Forum moderated by Carole Perry, WB2MGP. For 25 years Carole has promoted our hobby to the youth at Dayton. Young folks stood up and presented their stories about their experiences that brought them into ham radio and kept them motivated to continue. One presenter was Erin King, AK4JG, 17 years old, involved in her high school High Altitude Balloon Program and sent her MIT acceptance letter on a 95,000 foot journey into near space. Her story is now on you-tube and has gone ballistic. Most amazing was Miss Mikaila Williams, Extra Class licensee and 9 years old. She got her license as a result of the Japan tsunami disaster and after finding that many were saved as a result of ham radio. Both her parents are hams which provided much of the influence. She is a very well-spoken young lady. These young people are truly the future of our hobby.

Other great promoters appearing were Bob Heil, K9EID and Gordon West WB6NOA that also host the audio/video podcast Ham Nation on the TWIT network. Also seen was Frosty, K5LBU doing some fine promoting of his own.

Dayton Amateur Radio Association and the many volunteer truly put on a First Class event. If you haven't gone yet I encourage it. And if you're like me, it probably won't be your last. Pictures will be posted to the BVARC web site: www.bvarc.org.

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Minutes of May 3rd, 2012 Board of Directors meeting of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club:

Kirk Kendrick called the monthly Board of Directors meeting for the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club to order at 7:00 PM on May 3rd, 2012 at Fudrucker's, 11445 Fountain Lake Drive, Stafford, TX. Attending were: Kirk Kendrick, KK2Z (Pres.); Ross Lawler, W5HFF (V.P.); Bob Tomlinson, N5JSL (Cor. Sec./Treas.); Peter Sauermilch, KD5QPX (Rec. Sec.); Rick Hiller, W5RH (Past Pres.); David Barber, K5NDB (1yr At-Large Dir.); Eddie Runner, NU5K (Webmaster); Suzanne Runner, KF5GWZ; Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM; John Chauvin, K5IZO (Newsletter Editor); Bill Stone, WS5H, Norma Stone, KE5NDN (QSL Manager); Sharon Tomlinson, KF5HUF; Charles Frost, K5LBU; Mike Hardwick, N5VCX; Ron Litt, K5HM; Jerry Muller, KF5EYC; Matt Tatro, K5NGU; and Mark Lawler.

1. Minutes for the April 2012 meeting were approved as previously distributed by email and as appears in the May 2012 newsletter.
2. Financial Matters:
 - 2.1. Treasurer's Report was presented to and received by the Board.
 - 2.2. BVARC received a deposit refund from the fair grounds for the 2012 hamfest. \$40 was withheld from the original deposit for the electricity consumed. Tomlinson considers the hamfest books closed, though he is not ready with the final report.
 - 2.3. BVARC received a certificate from the ARRL for the donation made to the Spectrum Defense Fund.
3. Old Business:
 - 3.1. Museum Ships Weekend (MSW): Ron Litt submitted an itemized expense estimate for the 2012 event. After discussion, the board moved to allocate up to an additional \$200 for unforeseen expenses.
 - 3.2. Field Day: Matt Tatro summarized preparations made thus far. He plans to make a short presentation at the May General Membership Meeting.
 - 3.3. Club House Committee: John Chauvin summarized progress made thus far.
 - 3.4. Computers: Ron Litt will load logging software on the two computers donated to BVARC (see April minutes). Three other personal computers are thought to be on site at the MSW event with logging

- software. Discussion followed regarding time stamping problems on paper logs.
4. New business:
 - 4.1. ARRL Special Services Club status: John Chauvin questioned if the club needed to take action to insure continued status. Mike Hardwick is to research matter and take appropriate action.
 - 4.2. Ron Litt suggested that BVARC acquire a fire extinguisher and first aid kit. The club is hosting is several activities a year where both would be prudent on-hand items, especially where gasoline generators are in use. John Chauvin thinks he can acquire donated extinguishers that City of Stafford ordinances mandate replaced based on age. Jerry Muller offered to have said extinguishers tested. Muller will explore acquiring donated first aid kits.
 - 4.3. Club Safety Officer: Jerry Muller volunteered for and was appointed by the board to be the BVARC Safety Officer.
 - 4.4. Texas QSO Party Plaques: Kirk Kendrick noted that it is time to spend the \$104 allocated in the budget for the TQP plaques. Board agreed. No motion was required as funds already approved in the 2012 budget.
 - 4.5. Club QSL Manager: Bill Stone has been the QSO manager for some time. He informed the board that he would like someone else to take over the position. He will continue as manager until a replacement is found.
 - 4.6. Club QSL Cards: Bill Stone informed that board that the club has quite a collection of received QSL cards, especially from Museum Ships Weekend events. He proposed that the club use a past years card collection to create some type of display to be donated the Chief of Boat, Cavalla Foundation. The board passed a motion to do so.
 5. Schedule:
 - 5.1. June: Steve Lee, FCC Enforcement Bureau, Resident Agent (unconfirmed)
 - 5.2. July: Field Day, Museum Ships, and Hamfest wrap-up presentations.
 - 5.3. August: Ice Cream Social
 - 5.4. September: Chuck Sanders Jr., Texas QSO Party (unconfirmed)
 6. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM

Submitted by Recording Secretary, Peter Sauermilch, KD5QPX



**Results of the May 8th
BVARC Amateur License Examination Session
by: John Moore, KK5NU**

B-VARC sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examination session that was held on Tuesday, April 10, 2012 at HCC's Scarcella Science & Technology Building here in Stafford. B-VARC sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examination session that was held on Tuesday, May 8, 2012 at HCC's Scarcella Science & Technology Building here in Stafford.

MEMBERS OF THE VE TEAM:

Dennis Dietrich, W5DDD
John Moore, KK5NU

Jeff Fussell, KD5VGE
George Ontko, KM5VP

Larry Jacobson, K5LJ
Robert Tomlinson, N5JSL

Three examination elements were administered during the evening to three applicants. Two new Technician class and one upgrade to General class license was attained; with the total number of elements passed being 3. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was 100%.

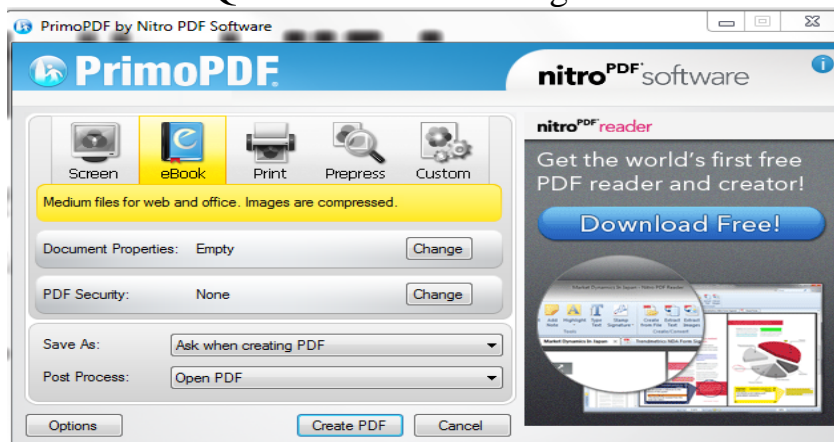
Congratulations to the following who attained a license and/or passed an exam:

Garland W. Calhoun - KF5PPJ - General
Heath A. Moore - - Technician
Michael D. Rapp - - Technician

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

Digital QST – Saving to a PDF File -- Precaution

The new digital version of QST is an excellent addition to our ARRL membership privileges. It is easy to save a certain article in PDF format by using one of the freely available PDF printer drivers* – like *Primo PDF*. However, when using these printer drivers, be sure that you set the output resolution to something greater than “screen” resolution. Primo PDF works best on “ebook” setting (shown below). Your saved QST articles will look great.



* Ref: “Ham Radio Information Storage Solution” -- Rick Hiller, W5RH
BVARC Newsletter, December 2004, Page 8

William “Bill” Pearson -- W5RJA -- Silent Key

Our good friend and fellow BVARC member Bill Pearson, W5RJA, became a Silent Key on Saturday, May 19, 2012 in Round Rock, Texas. Bill, 90 years old and an Advanced Class operator, had been a member of BVARC for many years and was known due to his participation on the BVARC 80 Meter Rag Chew Net from his home in Schulenburg. Bill was an Honor Roll Phone DX'er, as Ham Radio was a life-long passion for him.



Bill served as a pilot in the Army Air Corp during WW II and flew clandestine missions behind enemy lines dropping paratroopers, spies and other loads from his bomber. He spent 21 years in the U. S. Air Force.

Bill was always sprouting a friendly smile and had a kind word for everyone. We have been missing him on the Rag Chew Net for some time now, as he had been in the hospital for many months. We'll miss him more now that we know he'll never check into the net again.

Bill is survived by his wife Lillian, their 2 children and grandchildren.

Condolences can be sent to:
Mrs. Lillian Pearson
Parkwood Meadows - Apt # 243
310 Chisholm Trail
Round Rock, TX 78681-5074

BVARC Historical Vignettes – Long Wave Band Excitement

Allen Mattis N5AFV, Club Historian

In the early 1990s a number of BVARC members became interested in the long wave band which consists of the frequencies below 535 kHz (below the AM broadcast band). At that time, the long wave band had a number of different uses including maritime and aeronautical mobile and radio navigation, military communications, LORAN and Omega navigation, time standard stations, European and African broadcast stations, and even a 30-kHz wide experimental radio band.

The development and widespread use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) system for navigation has brought many changes to the long wave band. The Omega navigation system went silent in 1997. Use of the LORAN navigation system has greatly declined and the last LORAN transmitter in North America went silent in 2010. The use of GPS also affected the use of the long wave band for maritime and aeronautical radio navigation.

Twenty years ago a large portion of the long wave band was occupied by aeronautical and maritime radio-navigation beacons operating from 190 kHz to 535 kHz. This frequency range was well suited for such beacons because changes in the ionosphere due to solar flares do not have a significant effect on long wave propagation. There were over 7,500 non-directional beacons (NDBs) in North America at that time operating 24-hours a day with power ranging from 10 to 200 watts. The beacons identified continuously in slow CW, and were located at airports and key maritime locations. Logging these beacons was a great way for someone to improve their ability to copy CW. A radio listener with the proper equipment could log hundreds of these beacons. In one month in 1992, I logged 103 different NDBs in 13 states and 7 foreign countries.

BVARC members actively tuning the long wave band listening for NDBs included Allen Mattis, N5AFV, Bud King, N5UOG (now K5CEK), Steve Gottlieb, WA5OEN, Frank Stiver, N5TGM, and Greg Lefebvre, K5LTW (SK). Steve, WA5OEN, built an indoor loop antenna to null QRM and enhance reception of the beacons. BVARC members Glenn Edwards, WB4LZG, Don Brown, Sr., KB5KLY, and Vincent Orlando, WA5ETS, were involved with aviation and/or the Civil Air Patrol and provided useful information for the participants from an aviator's viewpoint. It was exciting to log low power NDBs from all over North America and even the northern portions of South America.

In 1993 and 1994 a number of BVARC members participated in Project Beacon and monitored four NDBs each day looking for changes in frequency and signal strength. These beacons were AAP (269 kHz), HU (395 kHz), JPA (347 kHz) and SYG (338 kHz) all located in the immediate Houston area. The primary monitors were Allen Mattis N5AFV, Ralph Cheek KB5DNT (now KL7AX), Bud King N5UOG (now K5CEK), TJ Layton KB5TIB (SK), and "Scanner Jack" Roberts KB5TMY.

The project was based on research conducted at Stanford University that documented ultra-low frequency electromagnetic emissions prior to and associated with the 1989 Loma Prieta, California 6.9 magnitude earthquake. The Stanford University research documented sudden enhancement of signals or sudden drops in signal strength, and perceived shifts in the received frequency of signals. Project Beacon was listening for similar phenomena near the active faults that cause subsidence in the Houston area. Even though Houston does not experience earthquakes active faulting is present.

The project documented six episodes of perceived frequency shift observed by the monitors. Four of these events correlated with changes in the rate of subsidence in the Houston area that were documented by the U.S. Geological Survey network of extensometers that monitor ground subsidence. The other two episodes of perceived frequency shift appeared to correlate to the occurrence of a 4.2 magnitude earthquake and a 3.0 magnitude aftershock 175 miles west-southwest of Houston in Atascosa County, Texas. The Project Beacon results were published in the Houston Geological Society Bulletin (April, 1995) in an article entitled "Possible Effects of Active Faulting on Low Frequency Radio Propagation, Houston, Texas Metropolitan Area." A geology professor at the University of Houston wrote a reply to the Project Beacon article and concluded by stating that correlating radio wave propagation events to movement on faults was no more scientifically valid than correlating sunrise and crowing roosters.

I recently tuned across the long wave band listening for the four beacons that were used in Project Beacon. I was very disappointed when I did not hear any them, but as Bob Dylan sang, "The Times They Are A-Changin'."

2012 Club Officers:

President:
Kirk Kendrick, KK2Z
kmkendrick@gmail.com

Vice President:
Ross Lawler, W5HFF
w5hff@yahoo.com

Corresponding Secretary / Treasurer
Robert Tomlinson, N5JSL
rbtswim@gmail.com

Recording Secretary:
Pete Sauermilch, KD5QPX
kd5qpx@arrl.net

1 Year At-Large Board Member:
Dywane Jones, KB5YTA
dwayneredhonda@gmail.com

2 Year At-Large Board Member:
David Barber, K5NDB
d_barber@att.net

Past President:
Rick Hiller, W5RH
rhiller@sdicgm.com

Club Happenings:

General Meeting
Second Thursday each month, 7:30 PM
Imperial Park Recreation Center,
234 Matlage Way.

Board of Directors Meeting
First Thursday of each month, 7:00 PM
Fuddrucker's, 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
See in adjacent column.

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

Under 15 CW Net
Tuesday night, 7PM, 3.550 MHz



BVARC EATING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

59 DINER, 7:00a.m., SW Freeway outbound service road, near Kirkwood.

NEW YORK COFFEE & BAGEL SHOP, 7:30a.m., 9720 Hillcroft.

OTHER HAM GROUPS:

WEDNESDAYS – WEDNESDAY LUNCH BUNCH

LUBY'S CAFETERIA, 10:30a.m. to 12:00Noon +,
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>

06/08/2012 | West Gulf Division Convention (Ham-Com)

Location: Plano, TX

Type: ARRL Convention

Sponsor: Ham-Com, Inc. & surrounding clubs

Website: <http://www.hamcom.org>

07/14/2012 | 2012 TARS Hamfest

Location: Texas City, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Tidelands Amateur Radio Society

Website: <http://www.tidelands.org>

08/03/2012 | Texas State Convention (Austin Summerfest)

Location: Austin, TX

Type: ARRL Convention

Sponsor: Austin Amateur Radio Club & Texas VHF-FM Society

Website: <http://www.austinsummerfest.org>





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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

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 Imperial Park Recreation Center, 234 Matlage 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 \$200.00.

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 146.94 (minus offset, PL 167.9 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
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FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

Museum Ships' Weekend, 7PM June 1 – 7PM June 3
General Membership Meeting – 7:30 – June 14, 2012
Field Day – June 23 – June 24

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