



BVARC BEACON



Newsletter of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club
AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

OCTOBER 2019

VOLUME 43 ISSUE 10

BVARC OCTOBER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, October 10th, 2019 7:30pm, at **TRANSTAR - 6922 Katy Rd, Houston, TX 77024.**

A pre-meeting dinner will be held at Pizzitola's BBQ 1703 Shepherd Dr. at 6:00pm

It's been a hot, humid and very rainy summer. Imelda has trashed the region and many are still wringing themselves out. Appropriately, the October meeting will consist of a tour of the Transtar facility which is Harris County's OEM Center. Be there promptly at 7:30, the tour will last about 90 minutes.



Report on the September General Membership Meeting

We met at the Sugarland Rec Center. The meeting presentation was by Chuck Abramson of ABR Industries – our very own local coax cable manufacturer. Many of us learned new things about how transmission lines are constructed, the constituents of coax cable – applications per type of coax and comparisons of connectors. Mr. Abramson is a proponent of the N-type for high power, better weatherability and good performance into the GHz ranges. Thanks for attending!!



It's Time for a Field Trip!

The club has had a few field trips over the years – Frosty's ham station at his school, Fort Bend County Emergency Operations Center and Channel 39 transmitter site. Unfortunately, it's been way too long since the last one. So.....it's time for another field trip for the club.

Due to the schedule at the Sugar Land Recreational Center, our normal meeting time was taken for October. With a need for a meeting space and topic, it was decided on a field trip for the club. So, for the October 10th meeting the club will be meeting at Transtar in Houston. A tour has been set-up for the club to walk-through the facility and see the main operations floor (where all the video monitors are), the Emergency Operations Center and the amateur radio room. The ECHO Society will be joining us for the tour so it should be a great turnout.

The schedule for the field trip will be;

5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Dinner at Pizzitolas BBQ, 1703 Shepherd, 77007

(for people that would like to get together for dinner. If not, go a little later for the tour)

7:00 pm to 7:30 pm

Check-in at Transtar, 6922 Katy Rd, Houston, TX 77024

You will need to check in with Ben Gillis at the front of Transtar

7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Transtar Facility Tour

Tour will consist of the main floor, EOC, and the amateur radio room. Due to time constraints, no one will be able to operate from the amateur radio room.

So get your walking shoes on and come on out for the Transtar tour. If you have the time, come on by Pizzitolas BBQ for dinner.

Hope to see everyone there.

N5VCX

The Prez Says

Fall is finally upon us and I am ready for it. With temperatures dropping down to the low 90's, everyone should be able to install their HF antennas with only a small chance of getting heat stroke (HI HI). Also now is the time to start getting your HF station ready for the CW and Phone sweepstakes in November.

It was a great program last month from ABR on coax cables. The program was extremely informative, and it answered many questions that I know everyone had. If you have questions that were not answered, I bet you can call ABR and they will be glad to answer them. Thanks go out to ABR for coming out and doing the presentation.

The October meeting has BVARC going on a field trip to Transtar. If you have never been there, you should make sure that you make it to the meeting for a great tour. For those that come out early, we will be meeting at Pizzitolas BBQ for dinner before the meeting. More information on the field trip is in the newsletter. So just to make sure that everyone knows, there will be no October meeting in Sugar Land. The meeting schedule will start back on November 14th.

Don't forget that Club Elections will be coming up in November. The club needs your help to keep BVARC running and manage and coordinate all the aspects of running the largest amateur radio club in Houston. If you would like to help the club by volunteering your time to be on the board of directors, please contact Rick Hiller, W5RH, and let him know you are interested in running for office. You can also nominate someone from the floor if you want to but make sure you talked it over with them so there are no surprises. Please consider running for one of the positions on the BVARC board of directors.

And in December will be the annual Home Brew night. Bring out the best of your home brew equipment and show it off. Let Jon Noxon know if you would like to exhibit.

Make sure you put on your calendar the following contests:

October 10 - 10-10 Day School Club Roundup

October 21 - 25 – ARRL School Club Roundup

October 26 - 27 - CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB

More contest info is available at <http://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.html>

And finally, ARRL elections for West Gulf Coast Division director are being held. It may be too late to vote for the division director but you should think about joining the ARRL. I know many of you are not ARRL members, but you should remember that the ARRL is the only voice for amateur radio. There have been many instances where you do not agree with the ARRL but without the ARRL, you may not even have a license to operate. At least give the ARRL a try and see what they are trying to do to protect amateur radio and make it not only a fun hobby but a useful one.



Main Floor Transtar

Texas QSO Party

Did you submit your log?

As you see below, BVARC supports the Texas QSO Party. You too can show support by submitting your log. It doesn't matter how many Qs you made, 3 or 300, every submittal is another member that shows support. You still have time, so please do so today.



2018 Texas QSO Party Winners

BVARC does many things throughout the amateur radio community. From sponsoring the Greater Houston HamFest to Museum Ships Weekend to one of the largest Field Day event in the state, BVARC stays involved the in amateur community. One of the other things that BVARC does is sponsoring the award plaques for the Texas QSO Party. The club has been doing this for a number of years and plans on continuing doing it for the foreseeable future. For the folks that have not seen the plaques or know the winners for the 2018 event, I have put them below for everyone to see.



N5VCX

Cutting Through the Static – A Column for Newbies

JP Pritchard, K5JPP

What's your reason? You may have acquired your ham license to pursue knowledge of electronics or participate in the competition of "radio sport," or some other of the many opportunities of ham radio, but it's important, and not only for newcomers to the hobby, to remember ham radio's reason to be.

The Amateur Radio Service is established under §97.1 of the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations for five reasons, starting with "Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications."

Truth is, many hams start out intending to be of public service, acquiring their license to be a part of RACES, ARES, MARS and other emergency service organizations, and never even considering other less altruistic opportunities.

Whether or not that's your reason to be a ham, it is our higher calling and provides us with a wonderful and useful way to give back to our community.

And it's easy to get involved, if you're willing to invest in yourself, taking advantage of the training offered by public service organizations.

On that note, a good place to start is the Amateur Radio Emergency Service, otherwise known as ARES. Here is the website of the Harris County Chapter. (<https://harriscountyares.org/>)

This is not an exclusive club. Hams from other counties are welcome to train and participate in the Harris County operation. Folks in Fort Bend County might also want to look into EMROG, Emergency Management Radio Amateurs Group. <https://fbcoem.org/emergency-management-radio-operators-group-emrog/>

One bit of good news for amateur radio newbies is this – getting involved with public service doesn't require a big investment in equipment. But to be an effective participant, it does require some of your time and effort, training in procedures and best practices.

Actual service in these groups doesn't always mean helping in the aftermath of disasters. Afterall, disasters are, by definition, rare events. That said, some of the best amateur radio training occurs during public events. For instance, the BP-150 bike trek to Austin, the Houston Marathon and a lot of other events where hams can assist authorities and organizers by using their radio skills to report progress and problems.

And when authorities call for communications assistance in an actual disaster situation, the skills you learned helping with entertainment or fundraising events, will transfer nicely.

For newbies, it's good to know that you can get started in public service without investing a bundle of your hard-earned money. For some events, a handi-talkie will suffice, but the real base requirement is a dual band mobile rig of 25 watts or greater and a "gain antenna." There are lots of these in the used market for reasonable prices.

BVARC President Mike Hardwick has spent a better part of his lifetime pursuing public service through amateur radio. He has some great suggestions for those considering following a similar path. First among his suggestions for newbies: Keep your brain engaged and your ego in check.

He's seen too many folks acting like their ham radio license gives them some special authority. Not so, of course. Your license is a ticket to help, but it doesn't give you a badge.

Mike also suggests that newcomers to ham service hang back a little. Learn from others before you do something that creates a hassle for others. Ask questions, be willing, stay humble.

So, maybe you'd like to give it a go. I suggest signing up at the ARES website mentioned above. There's a simple application to fill out. That will get you on their email list so you'll receive notifications. Then, I suggest creating a folder or two on your computer where you can store contacts, organizational materials and training information.

The ARES folks will welcome you with open arms and answer your questions as well. You'll find ARES or any of the other service groups will provide you with many opportunities to meet like-minded people, enhance your hobby experience and become a real asset to your community.

73, JP K5JPP



September (and August) VE - FCC TESTING SESSION RESULTS

For the Saturday's August 3rd and Sept. 7th test session: We had 9 and 2 candidates, respectively.

New Licensees:

Gunderson B. (Technician)
Duzic Z. (Technician)
Flores B. (Technician)
Bullock J. (Technician)
Wasson B. (Technician)
Levy D. (General)

Upgrades

KG5USI (General)
KI5FZX (General)
KI5FEE (Extra)
KG5IJU (Extra)
K5RBC (Extra)

Note that Mr. Flores came back in September and upgraded to General (KI5FZX).
Mr Levy walked in without a license and walked out with a General!

Congratulations to all!

A great thank you to the VEs in attendance – K5LJ, AK5G, K5GOL. K5IZO and K5LER.

Of these testing candidates – NINE are a new BVARC members!

Examination sessions are held each month, usually on the same day as the Saturday BVARC Board meeting. These sessions are at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St., Houston TX 77074

Details for candidates are found at www.bvarc.org/home/amateur-license/

Call Mark Janzer, K5MGJ at (832) 875-0526 or eMail: (k5mgj@yahoo.com) to pre-register.



Editor's Note: Last month's issue of The Radio Hotel had some formatting issues created by the layout of the template for the BEACON. Hopefully, this month's version is closer to the format that Rick intended.

The Radio Hotel – Multi-banding Methods

by Rick Hiller – W5RH

What is the best multi-band antenna? Well...it depends on a number of factors....number of bands desired, space available, dollars available, hanging supports available, equipment capability available, etc. The solutions vary, but I can reference you to a few of the more popular methods (and \$ cost) done both commercially and DIY. **Illustrations on the following page.**

\$ 40/15 Dipole -- Build a 40 meter dipole and feed it with coax. Once tuned, try loading it on 15 meters. Should be a close match (mine is 1.7:1 on 15), with your xcvr internal tuner finishing the matching. It is an 'easy up' single wire for two bands with a bit of gain on the higher band. Get it up as high in the air as you are able – 30, 40 or 50 feet will provide you great performance. Keep your fingers crossed for 15 Meters to open up. HI

\$ The McCoy Dipole – a single wire dipole fed by tuned feeders (open wire, ladder line, etc.) with an ATU/Matching Network in the shack acting as a variable transformer matching the antenna system to 50 ohm transceiver in/out impedance. Search QST's from 1955 to 1977 Call sign W1ICP—Lew McCoy. He has written a bunch of articles on antenna systems and various other subjects.

\$\$ Fan/Parallel Dipole – Coax fed, center feedpoint with multiple resonant wires for the bands desired. Alpha Delta DX series does an excellent and robust version of this type of multi-band antenna. Have a go at building one for the bands you need. It's pretty easy.

\$\$ The Off Center Fed (OCF) Dipole. It is a single wire for the lowest frequency band. Then for the other bands it takes advantage of the multiple standing waves on that single wire generated by each of the higher frequency Ham Bands we wish to cover. The 4:1 transformer fed feedpoint is strategically located to be a low Z current feed on each of the bands. Lots of commercial versions.

\$\$\$ Trap Dipole – popular for multi-band / tri-band Yagi-Uda's, but can be used on wire antennas. Requires 2 traps per band, except the lowest frequency band which uses the full antenna element length. Unidilla Traps were very popular years ago for this purpose, but now can only be found on the used market. QST has multiple articles about building your own traps.

\$\$\$ Sleeve Coupled dipoles – A single band resonant dipole (typically aluminum) is center, split fed. Then, resonant length elements of other higher bands are brought into close proximity to the driven dipole and will match. Proper separation is calculated based on frequency and wire/element diameters. No physical connection between elements is required. For a good example: check out Innovantennas.com and their “20m,17m,12m three band DESpole rotating dipole”.

\$\$\$\$ Stepp IR Dipoles, Verticals and Yagis – Automatically tuned, multi-band antenna systems. Go to www.SteppIR.com for a complete explanation. I will have one of these antennas at the November 14th meeting so you can see how it works.

Other antennas for multi-banding are the **End Fed Half Wave**, **TTFD – Tilted Terminated Folded Dipole**, **The LPDA – Log Periodic Dipole Array** and the **Discone**. Google search to get more information on the commercial versions available.

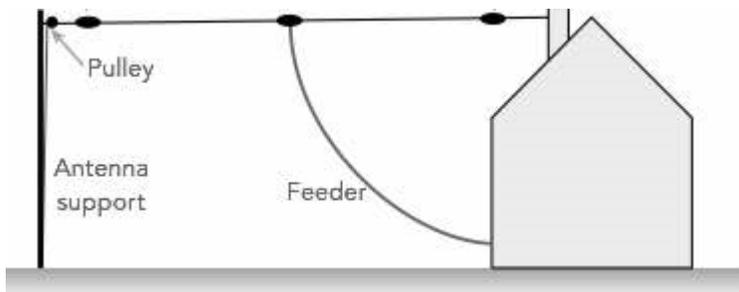
No matter which way you go, you will have multiple bands at your disposal and have lots of fun working the bands. Enjoy your hobby.....73...Rick – W5RH

Next time.... Dissecting Series #4 – The Stepp IR Small Vertical

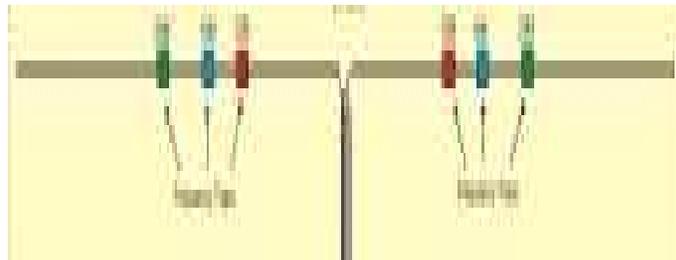
The Radio Hotel -- Multi-banding Methods

Illustrations

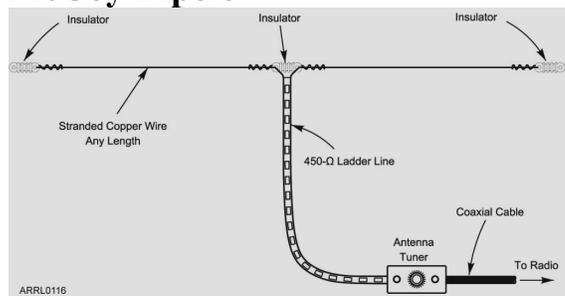
40/15 Dipole



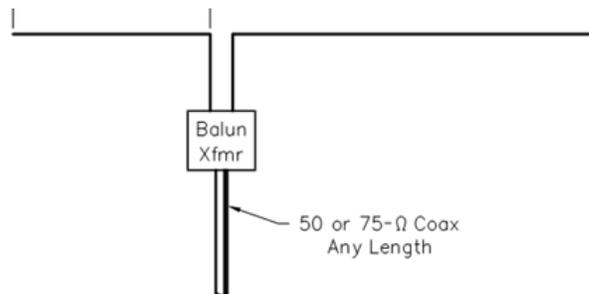
Trap Dipole



McCoy Dipole



Off Center Fed Dipole



Sleeve Coupled Dipoles



Fan Dipole

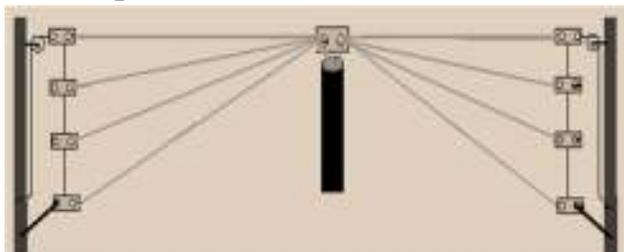


Illustration Credits: N4PGW, VU2PPP, ARRL, W5RH, Innov Antennas

MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting
Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

September 7, 2019 9:00 AM
Bayland Park Community Center
6400 Bissonnet, Houston, Texas

Board Members Present:
Mike Hardwick N5VCX (President)
Mark Janzer K5MGJ (Vice President)

Jon Noxon KF5TFJ (Rec. Secretary)
Jeff Greer W5JEF (Cor. Secretary)*
Donovan Bali KG5BDZ (Treasurer)*

Michael Monsour AC0TX (Director 2Yr)
Randy Pollard AK5G (visiting)

Recorded by Jon Noxon, KF5TFJ Recording Secretary

- 1) Call to Order: The President called the meeting to order at 9:06.
- 2) Establishment of Quorum: A business quorum was established. (Six of eight officers and board members present in person or by teleconferences)
- 3) Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved
- 4) Club President's Opening Statement: The President thanked those present for attending the meeting.
- 5) Emergency Business: None
- 6) Approval of Minutes from Previous BOD Meeting: The Board approved the minutes for the July 6, 2019 BoD meeting.
- 7) Approval of Treasurer's Report: The Board approved the Treasurer's Report, with an oral explanation of "goof-ups" fby the Treasurer. A glitch requires Randy Pollards's assistance to straighten out a QuickBooks issue. No issues with the Treasurer's Rejport Certain balloon launch donations made on behalf of the club by N5CVX Funding of TexaS Qso Pary Awards on going.
- 8) Corresponding Secretary: (verbal report) Membership renewal received via mail; new or additional qsl cards required to close the loop on QSL exchanges.

9) Old Business:

General Membership Meetings scheduled as follows, with topics not listed to be determined:

August 8, 2019 – Ice Cream Social. Daphne and Kelli are co-coordinators. Candidates for ARRL West Gulf Vice Director will be invited to meeting to present their platforms.

September 12, 2019 – ABR Industries (or Candidates for ARRL West Gulf Vice Director)

October 10, 2019 – TranStar field trip.

November 14, 2019 - Chili Supper and club elections.

December 12, 2019 - Home Brew/Makers Night.

Discussion regarding the January Club Awards Banquet.

Status of donations to Stewart (A/C and electrical improvements). Emphasis needed to get Cavalla antennas working. Mobilization party to be determined.

Topics for future meetings.

Raspberry Pi and Linux programming.

SDR radio receivers.

Antenna modeling.

10) New Business:

For GHHF, will share FBC Fair Grounds with Innovation-Spark (can not use the term "Maker's Faire" cannot be used due to legal problems. Event tentatively called **Greater Houston Ham Fest and I-Spark Convention**.

11) Cost Saving Measures:

Status Continue looking into this on an on-going item.; Storage Locker is the remaining major expenses. Banquet costs will be reduced with selection Sharon Moore to cater the banquet. Suggestion to reduce Beacon issue to bi-monthly discouraged by the President.

12) Next BOD meeting date:, Oct 5 2019

Future BoD dates: Dec 7 2019 (Possible conflict with Pearl Harbor Event @ Stewart, if we do it)

13) Comments:

14) Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:51 am



Update: The Illusive Wet Noodle

by Rick Hiller – W5RH

I wrote, in September 2018, **The Radio Hotel** column about the mythical Wet Noodle Antenna and its' use (or non-use) in Ham Radio. In my research at that time, I found nothing in QST, Ham Radio, CQ or 73 magazines about a wet noodle antenna. Only one entry on the e-ham.com comments page about an unsuccessful, pasta based VHF antenna.

But now, I have found something. Going to the BVARC meeting has its' advantages of picking up old copies of ham radio magazines, which I did at the September meeting. CQ of April 2018 (April ??? HI) just happened to have an article about a QRP'er in the wild, fabricating a pasta based antenna. He made a 20 meter dipole out of MRE spaghetti, as he had left his actual dipole antenna at home by mistake.

Long story short, he was successful in getting it built and to load. In the end he made, just barely, 3 CW QSO's. Now, his implementation was not the best, as there were many pieces of wet, salty spaghetti pressed together end to end to make the 32 foot dipole, which he supported off the ground, inside an old garden hose he found in the State Park's trash.

OK, not a great story about a new antenna you should try, but certainly one to put faith into the MacGuyver in all of us. If you want a PDF copy, send me an e-mail. 73....Rick W5RH



Where in the World is . . .

As this issue of the BVARC BEACON goes to press, this popular article is not available. Look for it in next month's issue.



BVARC Monday Night Public Service Net Updates

Don't forget the BVARC Monday Night Net starts at **8 pm** on 146.94 (167.9). The order of check-ins starts 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 Rick, w5rh, if you are interested. Here are recent check-ins with control-ops:

6/17 - 14 - Dave, k5ekw	7/15 - 13 - Dave, k5ekw	9/2 - 13 - Dave, k5ekw
6/24 - 25 - Clint, kf5ndf	7/22 - 15 - Clint, kf5ndf	9/9 - 18 - Richard, kg5ycu
6/24 - 25 - Clint, kf5ndf	8/5 - 19 - Dave, k5ekw	9/16 - 22 - Dave, k5ekw
7/1 - 14 - Dave, k5ekw	8/19 - 18	9/23 - 20 - Clint, kf5nd
7/8 - 18 - Bill, kg5fqx	8/25 - 15 - Clint, kf5ndf	

BVARC QUICK STATS

Date	Total Membeship	Newsletters	Life Members
9/25/2019	203	196	71





BVARC Rag Chew Net

Below is the BVARC Rag Chew Net check-in information:

08/28/19, K5LKJ (NCS), W5TKZ, K5LJ, N5EKW (Katy), K2MPP, W1BG (Katy), W5VOM, W5RH, WA5ANF (T), KG5VBE/5 (Conroe), KJ5Y (RCS)(W5FMH/club) (Angleton). (11 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 65, SN = 0, A = 10, K = 1 / Band Rpt: Poor, Lightning

09/04/19, K5LKJ (NCS), K5JPP, K5LJ, W5RH, N5EKW (Katy), W5TKZ, WA5ANF (T), K2MPP, KF5EYX, WD6CQO (Nederland), AA0ST (Dickinson). (11 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 69, SN = 0, A = 10, K = 2 / Band Rpt: Fair

09/11/19, K5LKJ (NCS), K5JPP, K5LJ, K2MPP, N5EKW (Katy), W5TKZ, AA5OA (Fort Smith, AR) (T), W1BG (Katy), KJ5Y (RCS)(W5FMH/club) (Angleton), W5VOM, AA0ST (Dickinson), KF5EYX, W5RH, WA5ANF (T). (14 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 69, SN = 0, A = 4, K = 0 / Band Rpt: Fair

09/18/19, W5TKZ (NCS), W5VOM, WW5PA, K5LKJ, WA5CYI, K5LKJ(T), W5RH, WA5ANF (T). (8 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 68, SN = 0, A = 8, K = 1 / Band Rpt: Fair

(M) = mobile (P) = Portable (R) = Relay (RCS) = remote controlled station (T) = telephone check-in

Net conditions have been fair this month. Learn what others are doing.

Come join in the conversation each Wednesday evening. Regards. John K5LKJ

(M) = mobile (P) = Portable (R) = Relay (RCS) = remote controlled station (T) = telephone check-in

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Net conditions have been fair to good this month. Learn what others are doing.

Come join in the conversation each Wednesday evening. Regards. John K5LKJ



Hamfests

(typically within 200 miles of Houston)

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

10/05/2019 | HamEXPO Fall 2019

Location: Belton, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Temple Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://www.tarc.org/hamexpo>

10/19/2019 | South Texas Hamfest & Electronics Expo

Location: Sinton, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: South Texas Hamfest Association

Website: <https://southtexashamfest.org/>

01/10/2020 | Radio Fiesta 2020

Location: Schertz, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: San Antonio Radio Club

Website: <http://w5sc.org>



Mecograph

William O. Coffe patented a semiautomatic key at about the same time that Martin patented the Vibroplex. Coffe's vertical bug was called the "Mecograph." The Mecograph mechanism involved the *release* of spring tension to create a vibration, rather than pushing against a spring as did the Vibroplex. Vibroplex sued Coffe for patent infringement and lost, opening the door for legal competition. Coffe made very few of the original wood based Mecograph keys, but soon sold to Bellows who oriented the mechanism in a horizontal fashion on a brass base. Bellows produced several Mecograph models before Vibroplex bought him out, presumably to reduce competition.

BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

This newsletter, the BVARC BEACON, is a monthly publication of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club. For a full listing of officers and information about BVARC, please go to www.bvarc.org. Detailed information will be published in the BEACON every 3 or 4 months. Similarly, the "Eating Schedule" will be published every 3 or 4 months unless there is a change.

General membership dues are \$25.00 per year, with student dues \$10.00 per year, additional family members \$5.00 per member per year.

Club meetings are normally held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Sugar Land Masonic Lodge, 421 Eldridge Rd, Sugar Land, 77478. Check the above website for any possible changes.

BVARC amateur radio testing has resumed. It takes place typically on the Saturday before the 2nd Thursday of each month at 10:30 AM. Location: Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, 77074. BEFORE GOING, please check the BVARC website for any changes.

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, see the BVARC website: www.bvarc.org

Other contacts include:

President:, Mike Hardwick, N5VCX, n5vcx@att.net

Newsletter Editor, John Chauvin, K5IZO, k5izo@yahoo.com

Newsletter Printing, Assembly and Mailing: Daphne Rawlinson, K5VQY, daphne_rawlinson@hotmail.com.

Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM, k5cam@arrl.net ; Mike Teers, KG5SXG, miketrs@windstream.net

JP Pritchard, K5JPP, jppnews@comcast.net; Esther Pritchard, elop@comcast.net

NOTE: Officers, advertising and eating schedule are on the website. They will only be published in the Newsletter every few months.

VOLUME 43, ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2019

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

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

October 10, BVARC General Membership Meeting



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