



BVARC BEACON



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

MAY 2020

VOLUME 44 ISSUE 5

BVARC MAY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, May 14, 2020, time TBD an online venue and topic will be announced on the website, email reflector and through the RF nets early in May (after the newsletter had gone to print).

We won't be having IN PERSON meetings for a month or two. Club Business meetings will be held over a conference call, and Club meetings will not be held in person (Facilities are closed) but we are arranging a streaming meeting.



April VE - FCC TESTING SESSION (NO) RESULTS

As our volunteer VEs are aware, and generally everywhere, face-to-face test sessions have been canceled for the foreseeable future. We're hoping to restart testing when the Community Center reopens. One of the thoughts is to advertise a "make-up" session and obtain the large room at the Community Center and do a large session (with social distancing, advance reservations, etc.) to try and plow through the back log.

I'm getting a slew of almost daily inquiries for testing. One of the more persistent inquiries was able to line up and successfully complete a remote test session with the Alaska VEC (which has a 60 day backlog). Other VECs, including the ARRL are looking into a remote testing set-up, but as you may note, proper verification and an adverse influence free test area is paramount, to ensure an uncompromised test.

W5YI (VEC) has permitted some remote testing through a system set-up in examtools.org, The ARRL has a very limited number of groups that have tried as well.

Stay tuned.

When times are normal, 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.

The Prez Says

The main topic is still on everyone's mind – the COVID-19 virus. The effect to the US appears to be on the downward tread at the time of this writing but hot spots are appearing in several locations. I hope things do get better for everyone but I feel that it will be months before normal returns. With the future uncertain for many areas, we move forward the best we can.

BVARC is moving forward with the weekday noon "Stir Crazy" net. It has been a great success with John Whiteman, K5LKJ, (along with Dave Ely, N5EKW) doing a great job taking care of the "crazy" people who check-in on the net. The number of check-ins have ranged from 20 to over 35 with the conversations covering a huge range of topics. The "Stir Crazy" was a great idea by Paul Easter, WW5PA, and I want to thank him for putting a few brain cells (he has a limited amount) to work for BVARC. The "Stir Crazy" NET will continue for as long as needed and as long John and Dave can handle it.

While I am thanking people, I really want to thank the folks that have been doing NET control on the BVARC nets over the years. From John Whiteman, K5LKJ on the HF net for over 12 years to Dave Ely, N5EKW, Clint Davidson, KF5HDF and Terry Leatherland, K5PGF for the Monday night VHF net. Without them, we wouldn't have the weekly nets at all and that would really be a shame. When you talk to them on the air, tell them thanks for their hard work as NET control. And don't forget Cameron Mitchel, K5CAM, who has been controlling the 94 repeater on NET nights over the years as well.

Club functions are still affected by the COVID-19 virus. The facilities that host our general and BOD meetings and testing are closed through at least May with June now a possibility. We are still working on testing alternatives so keep checking the web site and listening to the NETS for any updates on any changes.

BVARC had its first teleconference general club meeting last month that went extremely well. Walter Holmes, K5WH did a presentation on APRS that answered a lot of questions as well as creating a few. We will have to have Walter back in the future to answer those questions and bring us up to date on changes to APRS.

The May general meeting will be held as a Zoom conference call again so check the web site and the NETS for more information at the date gets closer. We are still trying to confirm our program on "Clandestine Radios" but the presenter seems to be hiding somewhere! More to follow soon.

The club is having great success on our "new normal" weekly Breakfast. Besides a NET on 3907 at 7 am, we are now meeting in the IHOP parking lot. We order takeout (in some great IHOP take out containers) and bring it to a portable table and chairs that are set-up and have an almost normal breakfast. We have discovered that we can maintain our social distancing while telling lies at the same time without any problems. If you get a chance, come out to the "new normal" BVARC breakfast.

In case you have not heard, Museum Ships Weekend has been cancelled for 2020. I know Mark Janzer, N5MGJ, was planning a work party for Museum Ships sometime in May but with the ships closed due COVID-19, it did not happen. Hopefully in a month or two, Mark can reschedule the work party for the 2021 Museum Ships Weekend.

As for Field Day, nothing has been said by ARRL other than it will happen. There will have to be some rule changes but nothing has come out of Newington yet. If something is published, we will let everyone know so they can plan accordingly.

To keep the club going, we need to communicate with each other, both individually and collectively. Rick Hillers, W5RH, Monday e-mail notices have been doing a great job of doing just that. In fact, with John Chauvin, K5IZO, Daphne Rawlinson, K5VQY, JP Pritchard, K5JPP and his better half Ester the newsletter has been keeping everyone informed as well. I want to thank the "media group" for all their time and hard work.

Stay safe and healthy. Please practice hand-washing and social distancing,

73, N5VCX

What a Ham!

Amateur radio operators (a.k.a. ham radio operators) enjoy communicating with people all over the world. Many of them use Morse code when they transmit messages. Other operators use a microphone. They can send messages during natural disasters when phones, computers, and cell phones do not work.

Find and circle the amateur radio related words in the puzzle. Words may be forwards, backwards, up, down, or diagonal.

<u>Word Box</u>				
frequency	megahertz	call sign	voltmeter	QSL card
radio	hobby	worldwide	transmitter	receiver
antenna	Morse code	keyer	power supply	filter
repeater	modulation	microphone	signal	operator
station	tuner	ham		



BVARC Rag Chew Net

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

03/25/20, K5LKJ(NCS), K5JPP, K2MPP, K5LJ, W5TOM, WB4KTF (Austin), WW5PA, W5RH, N5VCX, KI5HOC, WA5ANF (T), W5TKZ, K5IZO, KG5SXG, N5EKW (Katy), AA0ST (Dickinson), KE5HDF, K5HEC, KJ5Y (RCS)(W5FMH (CLUB))(Angleton), AA5OA (Fort Smith, AR), KG5DF (Refugio), W5VOM, KF5PHA, K5PGF. (24 Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 71, SN = 0, A = 12, K = 1 / Band Rpt: Good

04/01/20, K5LKJ (NCS), K2MPP, W5TKZ, W5TOM, WA5CYI, K5JPP, K5LJ, W5RH, KG5SXG, KF5YYZ (Pearland), K5HEC, W5VOM, WA5ANF (T), WW5PA, K5IZO, AA0ST (Dickinson), WB4KTF (Austin), KB7QL (Rustin, LA), N5VCX, K5PGF, N5IL (Bryan), KF5PHA, KG5WDF, KJ5Y (RCS)(W5FMH (CLUB))(Angleton), KC5TT (Katy). (25 Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 69, SN = 0, A = 5, K = 2 / Band Rpt: Good

04/08/20, K5LKJ (NCS), K5JPP, W5TOM, WW5PA, W5TKZ, K2MPP, K5PGF, K5LJ, W5VOM, AA0ST (Dickinson), KB7QL (Rustin, LA), AA5OA (Fort Smith, AR), KG5VBE, KG5WDF, KG5SXG, KF5PHA, WW5OO (Cypress), NA5D, N5VCX. (18 Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 71, SN = 0, A = 3, K = 0 / Band Rpt: Good

04/15/20, K5LKJ (NCS), W1BG (Katy), WW5PA, K5LJ, W5VOM, KG5VBE, K2MPP, W5RH, W5ALW, AA5OA (Fort Smith, AR), KI5HOC, WA5ANF (T), K5JPP, KB7QL (Rustin, LA), N5TCB, K5PGF, K5TNL (Spring), KL7AX (Katy), K0AXX (Silsbee), AA0ST (Dickinson), KI5HAQ (Friendswood), N5VCX, KF5PHA, KI5AXD, KG5WDF, KG5SXG. (28) Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 69, SN = 0, A = 5, K = 0 / Band Rpt: Good

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

Net conditions have been fair to good this month. Fire up the rig and learn what others are doing and share in their experiences. Come join in the conversation each Wednesday evening. Regards. John K5LKJ

KJ5Y (RCS)(W5FMH (CLUB))(Angleton)



Cutting Through the Static – A Column for Newbies

Due to circumstances beyond the author's control, this article is not available this month. Please check next month's BEACON for the next article.

The Radio Hotel – Antenna Insulators

The work horse of different colors

by Rick Hiller – W5RH



For best antenna performance, you have to isolate the antenna wire from the surrounding buildings, masts, tree branches etc. Isolation is critical, especially at the ends of an antenna wire, where the voltage is the highest. Any wire contact at that point can cause havoc. So, an insulator is used to electrically separate the wire from the mast or rope. These insulators come in various sizes, shapes and materials. Dog Bone, Clam Shell, Egg, Electric Fence -- shapes made from ceramic, glass, injection molded plastic, wood, etc. The pictures above show a selection of antenna insulators, but this number is not even close to the total number of different types of insulators ever used.

Why are there ripples on some insulators? Skin effect...RF flows on the surface of a material and these undulations lengthen the leakage path.

Want to know more about insulators? Here are a few references:

QST May 1923 "Some Tests for Amateur Antenna Insulators"

DX Engineering DXE-UWA-END-KIT Patent # D534,905

DX Engineering – article "How Strong are DX Engineering Insulators"

TenTec Acro-Bat Insulator

Alpha Delta – DELTA CIN End Insulators

Enjoy your hobby.....73, W5RH

Where in the
World is . . .
Route 66 (On the Air)

I'm betting that by September, most of the Corona Virus will be in our rear-view mirror, and that name will once again call up the image of a pretty popular 807 type beverage that is a beer. If you were born after the age of tube radios, you can check out the comparison to the right.

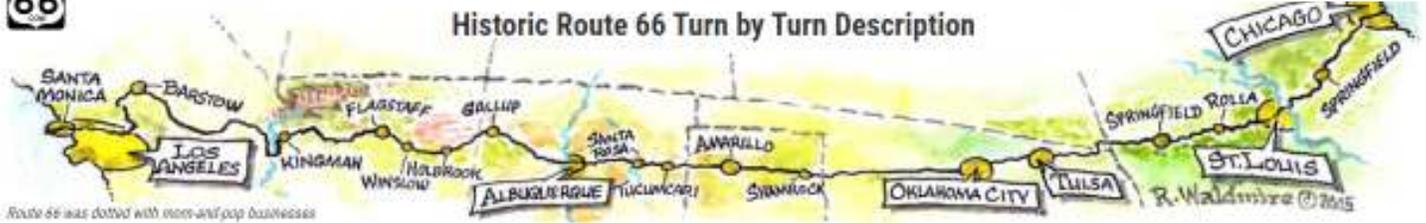


The timing couldn't be better. Just in time for this year's Route 66 On the Air event, scheduled for Sept 12 – 20. It means that designated stations with special call signs (W6A through W6U) will be operating along Historic Route 66 during the nine-day long event.

If you don't get the significance of this commemorative event, you are not a student of history or were born too late to remember the days before the Interstate highway system.



Figure 1 Corona vs. 807



The road begins in Chicago and runs to Santa Monica, California. It is not the oldest or the longest of the transcontinental highways, but it was the first all-weather highway to link the Midwest and Los Angeles.

It was designated US Route 66 in 1926, spanning more than 2400 miles and three time zones. In song and fable, it had other names. Officially designated the *Will Rogers Highway* by the State of Oklahoma and *America's Main Street*. It was also called the *Mother Road* (named that by author John Steinbeck in his book, "The Grapes of Wrath"). The book tells the story of a family of displaced dustbowl immigrants headed to California in search of employment in the 1930's.

The mystique of Route 66 was imbedded in books and films like:

- The Grapes of Wrath
- Easy Rider
- Thelma and Louise
- Bagdad Café
- Cars
- Paris, Texas
- Little Miss sunshine
- Route 66 (TV Series)



Figure 3 Grapes of Wrath



Figure 2 The Bagdad Cafe



Figure 4 Easy Rider

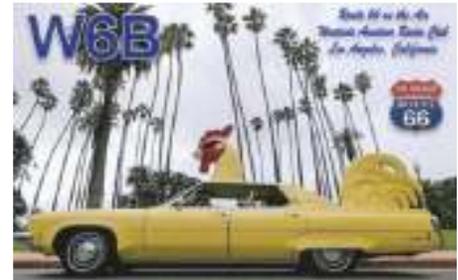


For more than sixty years the road served America in motion across the land with many unique features. During WW II it was the principal artery for the movement of war supplies. With the opening of the Interstate Highway System, most of the route was replaced. U.S. Route 66 was decommissioned in 1985. Although it was removed from the U.S. Highway system, most of the original route is still drivable. Many of the towns along the original route have become tourist attractions.

Figure 5 Delgadillo's Snow-Cap Drive In

If you are lucky enough to be on the Mother Road during that time, you might get an eyeball QSO with one of the stations along the highway. Or maybe stop and visit some of the annual events held at that time like:

- The New Mexico State Fair in Albuquerque, Sept 10-20
- Oklahoma State Fair in Oklahoma City, Sept 17-20
- Tri-State Fair and Rodeo in Amarillo, Sept 18-26
- The Train: Steam Sundays in Williams, AZ, Sept 19
- World Music Festival in Chicago, Sept 11-27



For more details check out <https://www.historic66.com/events/>



Each year the Citrus Belt Amateur Radio Club sponsors the Route 66 On the Air special event. For nine days in September, twenty-one stations with unique 1 X 1 call signs will be located along the original Route 66 calling CQ. This year is the 21st anniversary of the event. You can request a certificate if you contact at least one of the participating stations, though many hams try to contact all stations. Try and collect all 21 QSL cards this year. It is worth the effort. Get more information from their website at http://w6jbt.org/?page_id=15

Reporting from the Dark Side,

Ron, K5HM



MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting
Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club
April 4, 2019 9:00 AM
Vi a Teleconference

Board Members Present:

Mike Hardwick N5VCX (President)*
Jon Noxon KF5TFJ (Rec. Secretary)
Mark Janzer K5MGJ Vice President
John Chauvin K5IZO Parliamentarian

Jeff Greer W5JEF (Cor. Secretary) via
telecon
JP Prichard K5JPP (incoming Director
2Yr)

Scott Medbury KD5FBA (Director 2 yr)
Donovan Bali KG5BDZ (Treasuer
outgoing)
David Ely N5EKW (Treasuer incoming)
Rick Hiller W5RH Director At Large

Recorded by Jon Noxon, KF5TFJ Recording Secretary

Due to technical issues at my HQ, the audio recording was so bad that little information was recoverable. I apologize for the failure of the BOD Minutes for the April 4 meeting. I promise to work out a better solution for recording the conversations and transcribing same as formal minutes.

Jon/KF5TFJ



MUSEUM SHIPS WEEKEND 2020

MSWE has been canceled worldwide for 2020. Normally, the historic ships at Seawolf Park on Pelican Island, in Galveston, come to life as part of an annual worldwide event to commemorate their service. The destroyer escort USS Stewart is manned by BVARC hams communicating with over one hundred other historic vessels in the United States, and around the world. Adjoining is the submarine USS Cavalla, which provides an extra claimed ship QSO, for this location. A third ship, the SS Selma, a WWI concrete hulled tanker, would also be activated from the same location. The public may come visit the ships that weekend and observe the action (and amateur radio) during normal Seawolf Park hours of operation.

As for current status of the Ships, the Stewart is currently undergoing asbestos remediation, much of which in the areas we have been operating. As a result (separate from the Covid closing) the Stewart is closed until the remediation is complete. The Parks board closed the ships to the public (Covid related) and the Galveston Naval Museum has been trying to get access for their remediation contractor to complete the work during this down time.

Check out the link below for more information on the event: <http://www.nj2bb.org/museum/>

Also the website for the Galveston Naval Museum: <https://www.galvestonnavalmuseum.com/>

The Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club is grateful for the enthusiastic support of the Galveston Naval Museum and the Galveston Park Board of Trustees for their permission to be aboard the vessels and use of the park facilities. We look forward to continuing future activity. This allows us, in our own way, to honor those who served their country at sea and to support Galveston Parks.

2020 Officers:

President (2020-2021)
Michael Hardwick, N5VCX
n5vcx@att.net

Vice President (2019-2020)
Mark Janzer K5MGJ
k5mgj@yahoo.com

Recording Secretary (2020-2021)
Jon Noxon KF5TFJ
jon@noxon.cc

Corresponding Secretary (2019-2020)
Jeff Greer, W5JEF
greerj@hotmail.com

Treasurer (Finish 2019-2020 term)
David Ely, N5EKW
Davidely@prodigy.net

2 Year At-Large Board Member A: (2020-2021)
Rick Hiller, W5RH
Rickhiller73@gmail.com

2 Year At-Large Board Member B: (2019-2020)
Scott Medbury KD5FBA
smedbury@windstream.net

1 Year At Large (2020)
JP Pritchard, k5JPP
jppnews@comcast.net

Regularly Scheduled Club Happenings:

General Meeting

Second Thursday each month, 7:30 PM
Imperial Park Sugarland Recreation Center at
234 Matlage Way, Sugar Land TX, 77478
Due to COVID-19, as this goes to press, the meeting will be held
online. Check www.BVARC.org for more current info.

Board of Directors Meeting

The Saturday before the 2nd Thursday, 9:00 AM (For Sept., check
website)
Bayland Park Community Center
Bayland Park, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston.
Due to COVID-19, as this goes to press, the meeting will be held
online. Check www.BVARC.org for more current info.

Volunteer Examiner Program

The monthly ham testing session takes place on the same day and
location as the BOD Meeting, but at 10:30 AM. However, please
check the BVARC website for any last minute changes or updates.
Note: As this issue goes to press, the meeting location is closed due
to COVID-19. Please check the www.BVARC.org for updates.

Rag Chew Net

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

Public Service Net

Monday night on 146.94 (167.9) at 8:00 PM

SPECIAL NETS during these COVID-19 times:

A breakfast net is held on Saturday mornings and a "Stir Crazy" net
is held each weekday at noon. Check www.BVARC.org for current
info.



Advertising in the BVARC Newsletter

Rates are as follows; \$25 per month for ½ page, \$125 for six months
and \$250 for one year. The rates for a full page are as follows; \$50 per
month, \$250 for six months and \$500 for the year.



BVARC EATING SCHEDULE

**Note: Due to COVID-19 all eating events are cancelled
until further notice. Check www.BVARC.org for more
current info.**

SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

IHOP, 7:00a.m., SW Freeway inbound service road,
near Kirkwood.

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

(typically within 200 miles of Houston)

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

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

May-2020 - Dayton Hamvention

Cancelled

06/12-13/2020 - HAM-COM

Plano TX Convention Center.

<https://sites.google.com/hamcom.org/ham-com>

As this issue goes to press, Ham-Com is not yet cancelled.
Please check their website to get updates.

07/11/2020 - Swapmeet

Location: Texas City, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Tidelands Amateur Radio Society

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

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 Imperial Park Sugarland Recreation Center at 234 Matlage Way, Sugar Land TX, 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 44, ISSUE 5

MAY 2020

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

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

Due to the CoronaVirus, please periodically check the website for any news, special arrangements, possible teleconferences, etc.



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