



BVARC BEACON



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

MARCH 2021

VOLUME 45 ISSUE 3

BVARC March 11th ZOOM Meeting **John Stratton, N5AUS** **ARRL West Gulf Division Director**

The BVARC general meeting will have John Stratton, N5AUS, as the guest speaker. John has been the West Gulf Division Director for two years and has many years working with the ARRL both as the vice director and on several committees, including the ARRL Board Executive Committee.

John will be advising on what was discussed at the ARRL annual meeting in January as well as other plans and programs the ARRL is planning and working on. After John's presentation, he will be open to Q & A. So put the March 11th on your calendar.

The April 8th BVARC ZOOM meeting will have Paul Gilbert, KE5ZW, the new ARRL Emergency Management Coordinator.

The February 11th General Meeting was held online. We were honored to have Hank Garretson, W6SX, who made a presentation on Contesting. W6SX's Hank Garretson's presentation is on Youtube. Find it at: https://youtu.be/Qys_xU8lgCs

Club Business meetings will be held over ZOOM, feel free to attend. The zoom link is posted to the email reflector shortly before the meeting.



The Prez Says

Well, it has been an incredible month, especially the last 10 days. The big freeze affected millions of Texans either in power loss, water loss or water boiling. Personally, I did not have power for about 40 hour and had to boil water for about 72 hours.

Luckily, I had a generator that basically runs the whole-house, and we were prepared for the water issue due to past experiences with what else – hurricanes. In fact, the “training” and preparation with hurricanes and other weather events prepared us for the issues in the big freeze. This leads to the point of being prepared and ready for events like the freeze in the future. Are there still things that I can prepare for, of course there is. A few things that you should keep at home are:

1. Large tarps to cover roof damage (Big Lots have and they are cheap).
2. If you have propane tanks, a catalytic heater to put on one work great. Watch where you put it though.
3. Manual gas transfer pump to move gas from car-to-car or for the generator.
4. Extra car battery with an adapter to charge phones.
5. Collapsible water jugs (they take up less room and it makes it easier to carry).

There are many more items that fit for “home survival” that you may need so start planning now.

The presentation last month by Hank Garretson, W6SX was a great review of contesting. I appreciate Hank for spending time to do the presentation and welcome him anytime for our club meetings. I also thank Mark Janzer for arranging the presentation. Please check elsewhere in the newsletter for more information.

For the next two months, the BVARC presentations will be centered around ARRL. The March 11th meeting will have John Stratton, N5AUS, doing a “State of the ARRL” presentation. The April meeting will have Paul Gilbert, KE5ZW, the new ARRL Director of Emergency Management. Paul will tell us on what the ARRL is doing on interfacing between ham radio and public safety agencies. Both presentations should be very information so mark your calendar.

So, keep talking on the various NETS (there may be a couple of new ones coming up) and keep putting your radio and license to a good use.

73,
N5VCX

February VE - FCC TESTING SESSIONS RESULTS

Bayland Community Center is open, though they still have a restricted headcount, limiting the number of people in the test room. For Saturday, December 5th, **we had 25 candidates and conducted 33 tests.**

New Licensees:

T.J. Register (Technician)
T.C. Register (Technician)
B. McFarland (General)
D. W. Creary (Technician)
V. Joannides (Technician)
W. Bridgeman (General)
G.W. Metting (General)
D.R. Little (Technician)
J. Watson (Technician)

T. Kolenko (Technician)
M. Russell (General)
W. Vaughn Jr. (Technician)
A. Reed (Technician)
C. Culberson (General)
R. Sproll (Technician)
E. Cohn (Technician)
C. Lara (Technician)
S. Bulkley (Technician)

M. Shanks (Technician)
J. Robertson (Technician)

Upgrades:

Kiran R. KI5MXU (Extra)
T.M. Register W5WWZ (General)
F. Smith KI5KNP (General)
C. Hay KG5JBG (Extra)

Congratulations to all!

A GREAT, **GREAT** thank you to the VEs in attendance – K5GOL, KJ5EMP, W5GX, W5DRB, N5DTT, WM5N, W5JAZ and K5LJ.

We had scheduled a special session for February 20th (do to the overwhelming demand), but the freezeout shut down the Community Center. The next BVARC test session is Saturday March 6th, with two sessions at 9:00 and 10:30am.

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



Preliminary testing on a proposed simplex net.

Mark Brantana, N5PRD

Preliminary testing is being conducted simplex net. The purpose of the proposed simplex net would be to develop and practice the necessary procedures for such events. The desire to start this new net arose when the club repeater went down for a day during the recent weather emergency. Additionally the simplex net should provide opportunities to practice valuable radio skills. **According to Robert Polinski, in the event of another such an emergency, members are asked to utilize the club frequency, 146.940 in simplex until such time as the repeater is restored.**

Mark N5PRD will serve as the Net Control and Coordinator during the initial testing period anticipated to take place February and March. We hope to identify Alternate Net controllers capable of relaying information from their area nodes to Net Control, and vice-versa. Those interested in participating in this preliminary testing are requested to check in on the 146.940 repeater at 7:00 pm each Thursday except when the club meeting is being held. There will be a short initial discussion and then we will QSY to another frequency for simplex operation. **Note that the repeater will continue to be monitored to direct late checkins to the simplex frequency.** We look forward to having fun activities as we all develop this simplex net together and exercise necessary simplex skills. Additional announcements will be made on the noon Stir Crazy Net or you may contact Mark at mark.brantana@gmail.com.

The Radio Hotel – Return Loss(?)

By Rick Hiller W5RH

OK, I can hear y'all now, saying....."I finally understand what **SWR** is and how it is calculated and how it is measured and what it means and how best to ensure that it is as low as it can be in my antenna system, etc. etc. etc. And now, y'all are gonna confuse me again by using the term **Return Loss** instead of **SWR**. What the heck?"

Return Loss has surfaced in our ham world due to the new handheld antenna system analyzers like the Nano VNA and others. They will show **SWR** and **Return Loss (RL)**.

Just keep in mind that **SWR** and **Return Loss** are both indicators of the quality of the transmission line to antenna feedpoint Z match. As you know, reflected power is the result of an imperfect impedance match at the antenna (load) feed point. The greater the mis-match, the greater the reflected power. So either measurement indicator will work fine for our Ham Radio world of RF.

The Standing Wave Ratio or VSWR, with which we are most familiar, is a comparative measure of the transmission line's standing wave's maximum and minimum voltage values.

Return Loss, on the other hand, is a measure of the difference between the power forward (incident) and the power reverse (reflected). Showing, essentially, how much lower the reflected power level is versus the forward power level.

SWR is expressed as a ratio, such as 10:1 (bad match), 3:1 (OK match) or 1:1 (a perfect match).

Return Loss uses the decibel - dB scale defining a mathematical difference. Relating reflected power to the forward power. **RL** in its dB scaling allows finer quantification of matching when it gets down to the fine hairs of impedance differences. I would think that this is more applicable in the UHF and above area, (*although that is a SWAG on my part, as I have no experience in that range of RF*).

For reference: 10:1 SWR is -2dB RL 3:1 SWR is -6dB RL and 1.01:1 SWR is -46dB RL

From here on out, you'll probably use both **SWR** and **RL** representing the same thing – the health of your antenna system's power transfer.

For your reference: find a full table of SWR / RL / Reflection Coefficient relations at:

<https://www.rfcafe.com/references/electrical/vswr.htm>

Or see additional tables and references in the full version of **Return Loss(?)** on the Tech-Pages at
<http://bvarc.org/home/tech-pages/>

Also note, for a foundation level introduction to the subject of SWR and TL's visit

<http://bvarc.org/home/tech-pages/>

Read the **SWR—Series of 8 Articles** and **SWR – Seeing Watts Reflected** presentation

I hope that you find this abridged explanation to Return Loss and SWR useful in your daily ham radio activities.

Enjoy your hobby. 73, Rick -- W5RH

MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting
Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

February 6, 2021 9:00 AM
Via Videoconference

Members Present:

Mike Hardwick N5VCX (President)	Michael Monsour AC0TX (Quartermaster)	Rick HillerW5RH(2 yr at large director)
Sheree Horton WM5N (1 Yr at large director)	Scott Medbury KD5FBA (2 yr at large director)	Ron Litt K5HM
John Chauvin K5IZO(Parliamentarian)	Jeff Greer W5JEF (Cor. Secretary)	Chris Luppens KG5BBF

Recorded by Mark McGrath N5VCM Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order: The President called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM
2. Establishment of a Quorum: A business quorum of Board Members was established.
3. Club President's Opening Statement: The President thanked those in attendance for taking the time to join the meeting.
4. Approval of Agenda: The Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.
5. Emergency Business: No emergency business.
6. Approval of Minutes: The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as presented in the newsletter.
7. Approval of Treasurer's Report: No report.
8. Corresponding Secretary: Update on PO Box renewal and other projects.
9. Old Business:
 - Warehouse to be shut down.
 - Upcoming general membership meetings:
February - Contesting
March - ARRL update
10. New Business:
 - April meeting - No solid program yet. Possible topics discussed.
 - Possible kits for new hams discussed.
 - Reflector e-mail storage notice discussed.
11. Next BoD Meeting Date: March 6, 2021
12. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:38 AM



QSO Today Virtual International Hamexpo -- March 12th thru the 14th

Have a look at their website at: <https://www.qsotodayhamexpo.com/>

Earlybird entry fee is \$10, sign up now.

Review the speaker and topic list at: <https://www.qsotodayhamexpo.com/speakers.html>

Cutting Through the Static

A column for Newbies

(and everyone else)

We hams don't often begin a QSO (a contact between two hams) with 73, and I won't start this column that way either, but 73 is at the heart of what I'm writing about.

Most of us close out a QSO on the radio, or even an email with the number 73, but do you know what it means? Most hams today would say it means any of a few things like, "Best Regards," or "So long," or even "lets talk again soon."

But in his article on the subject, Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, points out that 73 originally had a very specific meaning in the 1857 list of Morse Code number abbreviations. Believe it or not, it meant "My love to you." He writes, "Even though it stood for a flowery sentiment, telegraph operators adopted this code as a way to greet each other on the wire and to wish each other well."

73 took on a less sentimental, but still cordial translation in 1859 when the Western Union Company published it's "92 Code." The new meaning was designated as "Best Regards," pretty much the same as its current meaning.

The 92 Code was called that because it was a list of 92 numbered messages that would make repetitive phrases less cumbersome than tapping out the full text of, say 10: "what is the weather?" or 21: "stop for meal."

The 92 Code defines 30 as "no more" or "the end." You can still find this code, written as "-30-" at the end of press releases, or even at the end a news story as written for submission by a reporter or editor. It just says "I'm done here."

If you think the language of the 92 Code seems a little stilted, I would point to the one code that breaks that rule. 88 means, "Love and Kisses."

The other shorthand system designed for Morse Code is the list of Q Codes. Even if you don't do CW, as a ham you'll hear a few Q codes that are common to phone (SSB) conversations. QSL, for instance, means received, or understood; or conversely, as a question "did you get that? Two other common Q codes on SSB are QRM, are you being interfered with? And QRN, are you troubled by noise?"

Of Q codes, Wikipedia declares, "The original Q-codes were created, *circa* 1909, by the British government as a "list of abbreviations ... prepared for the use of British ships and coastal stations licensed by the Postmaster General." The Q-codes facilitated communication between maritime radio operators speaking different languages, so they were soon adopted internationally." And that is certainly the way they are used today, among the basic tools of CW operators.

These codes, both the number codes and the Q codes are deeply embedded in the colorful and interesting history of amateur radio. If you are new to the hobby, you might want to take a little time to study some of the more common Q codes. They are still of use and knowing a few of the more common ones will help you feel a little more at home with the customs of ham radio.

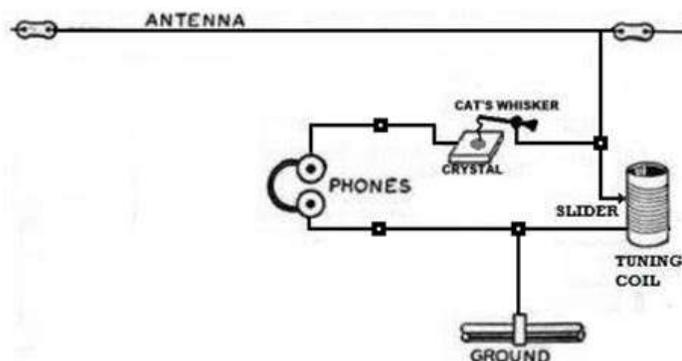
That said, 73 and 88. QSL?

K5JPP, JP Pritchard

The Feed Point

BVARC Members, How We Got Here

Jimmy Vance, NA5D, BVARC Vice President



I've been interested in radio for as long as I can remember. When I was 8 or 9, my dad gave me a crystal radio kit.

I'd sit in my room late into the night, tuning in AM stations all over the USA. As a teenager, I migrated to shortwave radio, and dad passed along his old Hallicrafters S-38C. Besides listening to broadcasts from all over the world, I was able to listen to amateur operators.

While I thought about getting a license, I didn't move forward with making it a reality. But I was all in when the CB craze exploded and had a blast on the radio. I had a few friends who had their amateur licenses, and one of them finally convinced me to learn CW and get my novice ticket.

I wasn't interested in CW, so I spent a lot of time on the 220 band as novice operators were allowed to operate on voice there. In the early 90's I upgraded to General, but throughout the late 90's and early 2000's I was mostly dormant in the hobby, but retained some interest, as a part of the Compaq Amateur Radio Club (ARC).

Around 2013, I started looking at the hobby again, I got involved with public service events and became a "motorcycle marshal" for the MS150. Since that time I have been deeply involved with both KARS and BVARC.

As a teenager, I dreamed of getting a First-Class Radiotelephone License, but never quite got going in that direction. I did get into computers early on and I enjoyed a 25-year run with Compaq/Hewlett-Packard in a technical role.

I try to share my expertise and pass on the knowledge I've gained working with computers and radios over the years. I try to promote the hobby where possible and have worked behind the scenes on many radio related events such as the Hamfest of Greater Houston.



AREA CLUB TESTING SESSION SCHEDULE

BVARC – www.bvarc.org

Testing – Typically on the Saturday before the second Thursday, at 10:30am at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St., Houston, contact Mark Janzer, k5mgj@yahoo.com

KATY ARS - www.katyars.com

Testing - Typically on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 9:30am at the Westlake VFD, 19636 Saums Rd. Houston, contact Gerald Doucet, testinginfo@katyars.com

OAK FOREST ARC - <http://www.ofarc.org/>

Testing – Typically, the 4th Saturday of the month at 6:00pm, location TBD, contact Mark Landress, wb5ann@arrl.net

NORTHWEST ARS - <http://www.w5nc.net/>

Testing – Typically the 4th Saturday of the month at 8am, location Klein VFD Admin. Bldg, behind Klein FD Station 4, 16810 Squyres Rd., Spring, contact Ron Matusek, ronm1@att.net or vec@w5nc.net

Harris County Emergency Management (HCOHSEM)

Testing - Typically the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm, Transtar 6922 Katy Rd., Houston, contact Franz Laugerman, franzlaugerman@sbcglobal.net



Wednesday Night Rag Chew Net

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

01/27/21, K5LKJ (NCS), K2MPP, K5LJ, W5TKZ, W5DRB (Brazoria), K5JPP, k5IZO/5 (Jasper), W5ALW, KI5HOC, WW5PA, K5TNL, AB5RJ (Cypress), W5VOM, W5RH, KG5BBF, WA5ANF (T), WD5L (T), W1BG Katy), NT5SM, N5VCM, K5EQ, N5FKW (Salado), KH9AE (Franklin), N5MTW (Terry, MS). (24 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 77, SN = 23, A = 12, K = 2/Band Rpt: Good

02/03/21, W5TKZ (NCS), N5VCX, W5TOM, N5VCM, K5TNL, K5LJ, W5ALW, KI5HOC, WW5PA, W5VOM, AA5OA (Percy, AR, AB5RT (Bella Vista, AR), KJ5I (Dennison), KG5WGF (Wylie), W5RH, K2MPP, W5JEF, K5LKJ (T), WD5L (T), KG5PVP (Friendswood), W5IDX. (21 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 72, SN = 12, A = 14, K = 3/Band Rpt: Good

02/10/21, W5TKZ (NCS), K5PGF, K5TNL, K5LJ, W5VOM, WW5PA, W5TOM, N5VCM, KI5HOC, AA0ST (Dickinson), K2MPP, N5VCX, W5ALW, KI5MKU, W5RH, WA5ANF (T), WD5L (T), AF5BF, WB4KTF (Austin), KG5BBF. (20 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 72, SN = 0, A = 3, K = 0/Band Rpt: Fair

02/17/21, W5TKZ (NCS), AREA FREEZE, NO POWER, NET CANCELLED

(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 hear what others are doing, and share your own experiences. Come join in the conversation each Wednesday evening.

Regards. John K5LKJ

2021 Officers:

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

Vice President (2021-2022)
Jimmy Vance, NA5D

Recording Secretary (2020-2021)
Mark McGrath -- N5VCM
mark@mcgrath-co.com

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

Treasurer (2021-2022)
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: (2021-2022)
Scott Medbury KD5FBA
smedbury@windstream.net

1 Year At Large (2020)
Sheree Horton, KF5LMJ
sher5456@gmail.com

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 at 7PM. 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.
The meeting location is open, however 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 monthly 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

**Most of these events have resumed while complying to
the Social Distancing and Mask requirements. Check
with the respective entity to see the actual status.**

SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

IHOP, 7:00a.m., SW Freeway inbound service road,
near Kirkwood. Masks and social distancing are
required.

OTHER HAM GROUPS:

WEDNESDAYS – WEDNESDAY LUNCH BUNCH

Due to COVID-19, this is currently not taking place.
When it does, information will be posted in the
BEACON, and sent to the BVARC Reflector.

WEDNESDAYS – AMSAT & QRP GROUP

PAPPAS BARBECUE. 11:30a.m., SW corner
Westheimer & Gessner. Not meeting now, but some
show up.



Hamfests

(typically within 200 miles of Houston)

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

03/06/2021

Greater Houston Hamfest

Location: Rosenberg, TX
CANCELLED

3/12-3/14, 2021

QSO Today Virtual International Hamexpo

<https://www.qsotodayhamexpo.com/>

May 2021

Dayton Hamvention

Xenia, OH
CANCELLED

June 2021

Ham-Com, Plano, TX

CANCELLED permanently

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 temporarily virtual via ZOOM on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. If you have signed up for the reflector, you will receive notice and the attendance password, etc. It will also be on the website (above) a few days beforehand.

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, because of COVID and scheduling conflicts, please check the BVARC website for any changes. Masks and social distancing are required.

A Public Service Net is held each Monday at 8 p.m. on the 146.94 (minus offset, PL 167.9 tone) repeater.

During COVID-19 a "Stir Crazy Net" is also held weekdays at 12 Noon on the same frequency as above.

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.

Jeff Greer, W5JEF, greerjw@hotmail.com, Mark Brantana, N5PRD

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MARCH 2021

**BRAZOS VALLEY
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FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

March 11, BVARC General Membership Meeting



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