



BVARC BEACON



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

MAY 2021

VOLUME 45 ISSUE 5

BVARC May 13 General Membership Meeting

The featured presentation will be on Hurricane Presentation, presented by Mike Hardwick, N5VCX. Also, there will certainly be info on Museum Ships Weekend (see elsewhere herein) which takes place on June 4-6) as well as other announcements. If you are on the BVARC Reflector (AKA Listserver) you will get e-mails before the meeting date with more info and the Zoom links. If you are not on the Reflector, go to the website (www.BVARC.org), and click on "Club Listserver" for more info and to sign up. Also, routinely check the website for updated info on the meeting info and other notices.



April General Membership Meeting Recap

The April BVARC General Membership Meeting (via Zoom) featured Paul Gilbert, KE5ZW, as Director of Emergency Management. His topic was Emergency Management.



HAMFESTS ARE BACK!

We are happy to note that hamfests have resumed.

- San Antonio, which normally has their Radio Fiesta hamfest in January rescheduled it (because of COVID) to take place next month on June 22 & 23.
- Texas City has resumed theirs. It will take place on July 10

Details on both of these are on the 2nd to last page of this issue.



The Prez Says

As this edition of the BVARC BEACON goes to press, this information is not available. Please look for an extended article in next month's BEACON.

May VE - FCC TESTING SESSIONS RESULTS

Bayland Community Center is open, they are currently back to 100% capacity, so no headcount limits. Facemasks are still required. For Saturday, April 10th, we had 12 candidates and conducted 18 tests.

New Licensees:

R. Holman (Technician)
E. Rahman (Technician)
M. Lambert (Technician)
D. Crump (Technician)
M. Wisneski (Technician)

Upgrades:

T. Kramer KG5JWT (Extra)
K. Bernard W5KMB (Extra)
J. Spelts KI5ONA (General)
G. Metting WA5ZVD (Extra)
M. Raval N8YOG (General)
A. Staib KG5RBR (Extra)
D. Little KI5NPB (General)

Congratulations to all!

For this session, the paperwork was sent electronically to ARRL-VEC that Saturday. On Monday April 12th, everyone in the session had their new license or upgrade posted to the FCC-ULS!

A GREAT, thank you to the VEs in attendance – K5GOL, W5JAZ and WM5N.

The next BVARC test session is Saturday May 8th, at 10:30am. **The testing fee is still \$15.** The date which this will change to \$15 test and \$35 license fee (totaling \$50), has not yet been determined, but is expected sometime this summer. Our current understanding is that VEs will collect \$15 at the test session and the \$35 fee will be collected directly by the FCC.

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.



MUSEUM SHIPS WEEKEND

Planning and preparations for Museum Ships Weekend, June 4,5,6 2021 are in full swing. It's one of BVARC's legacy annual operating events. It is a great introduction to operating in conditions like Field Day, in a non-competitive event. All are welcome to participate. We'll have up to three stations available for operations. Two will be on the Stewart (one is within sight of the Selma) and one may be in the Cavalla. We've acquired the amateur equivalent of the original USS Stewart callsign (N5FKP) and will be using it for the Cavalla and Stewart for the first time this year.

Food and (non-alcoholic) beverages will be available. There will be limited overnight accommodations available on the Stewart. Please register to attend by contacting Mark Janzer (K5MGJ).

A pre-mobilization meeting will be held via zoom on Tuesday May 11th, at 7:30 pm. We'll discuss and delegate tasks, as well as determine a pre-mobilization visit to the ships.

The museum ships are:

[USS Stewart](#)

WWII Destroyer Escort

Galveston, TX

[SS Selma](#)

WWI Merchant ship (Concrete Hull)

Galveston, TX

[USS Cavalla](#)

WWII Submarine

Galveston, TX

The Radio Hotel – SWR -- Last Gas For Cycle 25

by Rick Hiller – W5RH

A plea for more 5%'ers

I have been writing about Standing Wave Ratio (or SWR) for some time now, explaining what it is and how it is measured and what it means, etc. (See it all on bvarc.org/home/tech-pages/). But, I feel that most of my explanations are a trifle too deep in theory and detail and simply don't enhance the practical picture of designing, building and implementing antennas for Ham use. So with this column of May 2021 I am going to lay it on the line and finish the SWR topic from a simplistic, practical perspective.

Most hams know that to build a dipole antenna you have to figure the length: $468 / F \text{ MHz} =$ length in feet. Then you buy some material: wire, insulators, coax, connectors, etc. and build the dipole. Once constructed you hang it from the nearest tree or mast, etc. as high as you can get it or as high as the coax will allow you to go. You connect your radio and SWR meter to the coax and see what the SWR is across the band and adjust the wire length to obtain optimum (low SWR) results for the desired band portion. [Others that have an antenna analyzer run a "scan" of the band in question.] The SWR will be lowest at the point of resonance, no matter what the feed Z, and that point will hopefully be within the band boundaries. If your goal is CW/digital, lowest SWR should occur in the lower portion of the band. If phone is your target, the SWR should be lowest in the upper portions of the band and if you wish to work both, then some place in the middle of the band is best. For a simple dipole the sweet spot of SWR should be, at resonance, 1.5:1 maybe up to 2:1. Your radio will love you for it, as most transceivers want less than 3:1 SWR for full power out.

So there you have it: the bare bones guidelines for putting up a single band dipole antenna. This describes the needs of 95% of the hams that put up HF dipoles. No need to know what SWR actually is, other than knowing that the SWR measurement has to be about 1.5:1 or 2:1 etc. Don't need to know why it exists, how it is calculated or even how it is measured and probably don't need to worry about the influence it has on your antenna systems performance. If the SWR numbers are low, "the cat is in the bag" with no need to open that bag up again. Move on. Go operate Cycle 25. Make QSO's and get to know the band you have built the antenna for. Have fun.

Now, if you are in the 5% of Hams that wish to know all about SWR and Return Loss and Impedance, etc. etc. etc. There is plenty of information fodder on the web and in books that tell you all about it and explain it in a multitude of ways, one of which you are sure to readily understand. This is where I, personally, find solace within Ham Radio: knowing and understanding antenna systems. Do I need to know this in order to get on the air? No, I could very easily be a member of the 95% group. Now, that is all well and good until something goes awry; then, out come the tools. But what good are tools without the knowledge of how things work. What good are your watt meter or SWR meter or Nano VNA (tools used to troubleshoot and fix the problems) if you don't understand how your antenna system works. So, my plea is for you to strive to be one of the 5%'ers. You'll certainly be glad you did.

Best of luck and enjoy your hobby....73, Rick W5RH

Cutting Through the Static – A Column for Newbies (and others)

JP Pritchard, K5JPP

Why “Ham” Radio

The Japanese might call the word HAM in the context of amateur radio a “shibui,” a simple word that describes a complex set of activities. And I might call the origin of HAM a mystery. And there are several answers. You can decide the answer you like.

Version #1: A named Albert Hyman, who was a Harvard student in 1911, offered up a speech to the U.S. Congress, supporting amateur radio. His speech supposedly convinced lawmakers to reject a bill that would have put an early end to amateur radio by assigning all frequencies to the military.



“You never heard of a ham operator before?”

The legend goes that Hyman shared an amateur station with two friends, Bob Almy and Reggie Murray who used their initials to come up with their own call sign, apparently the first ever vanity sign, using the first letter of each of their surnames. CQ, CQ, CQ, this is H-A-M, calling CQ. Because of Hyman’s heroic speech and their early place in the hobby, their call sign became symbolic of all amateur radio, hence the moniker “ham radio.” Trouble is, there is little or no evidence to support the story.

Version #2: HAM was alleged to have originated from a magazine that included articles about amateur radio. Once again, evidence is lacking. Seems no one has found a trace of any periodical called “Home Amateur Mechanic” magazine.

Version #3: Another theory proposes that HAM is the first letters of the names of three radio pioneers: Heinrich Rudolf Hertz, Edwin Armstrong and Guglielmo Marconi. But in my opinion, it would be HAT radio, for Hertz, Armstrong and Tesla.

Version #4: Newcomers would never guess that one legend of the hobby was the genius marketing coup from the early twentieth century for the amateur radio company known as Hammarlund -- Ham, being short for Hammarlund. Trouble is the term HAM radio was already in use when Hammarlund began building radios.

Version #5: (Probably the real deal) In the middle nineteenth century, the highest of high technology communications used lots of wire, d-c current and old fashioned standard key telegraphy. These professional telegraphers had a hot hand and were proud of their skills. An individual’s style was sometimes called his “fist.” When communication companies tried to lower costs by hiring amateur telegraphers, the pros resorted to name calling, referring to the newbies as incompetent and lacking grace, sometimes referring to them as “ham fisted. And for short, they were referred to as “hams,” meant as a hurtful pejorative.

But these hams refused to be put down and did exactly as many victims of name calling have in the past. They began proudly referring to themselves as hams. It’s kind of like the soldiers of the American Revolution being called “Yankee Doodle Dandies.” The revolutionaries took the sting out of the insult by laughing it off and wearing it proudly. For more, look up Etymology of ham radio on Wikipedia.

The Rag Chew Net

Every Wednesday, 7:00 PM,, 3910 MHz.

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

02/24/21, K5LKJ (NCS), KI5HOC, K5LJ, K2MPP, K5EQ, W5VOM, K5KTD (Austin), KL7AX (Katy), N5VCM, KC5TT (Katy), W5ALW, N5MTW (Terry, MS), K52GQ (Jupiter, FL), K5TNL, WB4KTF (Austin), KD4MCB (Montgomery), K5PGF, KG5BBF, W5RH, WD5L (T), WW5PA, KZ5W (Tomball), N5MRD (Fernandina Beach, FL)(T), W5THC, WA5ANF (T). (25 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 25:SFI = 78, SN = 31, A = 23,K = 4/Band Rpt:Fair

03/03/21, K5LKJ (NCS), W5VOM, W1BG (Katy), K5LJ, W5ALW, N5VCM, W5JEF, KG5BBF, W5RH, KI5MKU (T), WA5ANF (T), AC5KD (Pearland), WD5L (T), KI5LFZ, N5MRD (Fernandina Beach, FL)(T). (18 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 25:SFI = 74, SN = 28, A = 24, K = 2/Band Rpt: Fair

03/10/21, K5LKJ (NCS), AA5OA (Pearcy, AR)(T), K5JPP, W5TKZ, K5TNL, W5ALW, N5VCM, K5LJ, KD5GES (Gilmer), W5VOM, W1BG (Katy), AA0ST/5 (Missouri), W5TOM, KB5QL (Rustin, LA), KI5HOC, KD4MCB (Montgomery), N5VCX, KG5BBF, W5RH, KE5ZQK (Sulfur, LA), KG5WDF.
(21 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 77, SN = 23, A = 3, K =0/Band Rpt: Fair

03/17/21, K5LKJ (NCS), W5VOM, K5LJ, K5JPP, K2MPP, W5TKZ, W5TOM, WW5PA, N5VCX (T), KG5SBA, N5VCM, KD4MCB (Montgomery), KB5QL (Rustin, LA), KF5ONT, KI5HOC, K5HEC, K5TNL/5, W5JEF, KG5BBF, NR5TX (Kingwood). W5RH, KI5MKU (T), WA5ANF (T), K5EQ, WD5L (T), AA0ST/5 (Missouri)(T),W1BG (Katy), KG5WPE. (21 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 72, SN = 23, A = 4, K =1/Band Rpt: Fair

03/24/21, K5LKJ (NCS), AA5OA (Pearcy, AR)(T), W5TKZ, K5JPP, KD5FBA, W5VOM, K5LJ, AA0ST (Dickinson), W5JEF, KG5BBF, K5TNL, KB7QL (Rustin, LA), NR5TX (Kingwood), N5VCM, K5PGF. (15 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 25:SFI = 76, SN = 26, A = 11, K = 2/Band Rpt: Fair

03/31/21, K5LKJ (NCS), W5TKZ, K5LJ, W5RH, AA0ST (Dickinson), W1BG (Katy), N5VCM, W5ALW, KB7QL (Rustin, LA), W5TOM, W5JYB (Waskom), N5VCX, KD5FBA, KG5BBF, WD5L (T). (15 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 25:SFI = 74, SN = 0, A = 3, K = 2/Band Rpt: Fair

04/07/21, W5TKZ (NCS), W1BG (Katy), KF5ONT, K5LJ, KE4DRF, N5VCM, W5VOM, W5TOM, K5JPP, AA0ST (Dickinson), K5LKJ, AA5OA (Pearcy, AR)(T), W5DRB (Brazoria). (13 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 25:SFI = 71, SN = 11, A = 17, K = 2/Band Rpt: Fair

04/14/21, K5LKJ (NCS), W5TKZ, W5CEJ, W5DRB (Brazoria), K5IZO, K2MPP. (13 Early Check-Ins) NET CANCELLED DUE TO AREA LIGHTING STORM.
Solar Cycle 25:SFI = 74, SN = 16, A = 5, K = 2/Band Rpt:Poor

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

Net conditions have been fair 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



Board of Director's MINUTES

Because there was no quorum, there was no meeting and therefore no minutes.

The Feed Point

BVARC Members, How We Got Here

Jeff Greer W5JEF

I was a latecomer to amateur radio; I was first licensed (as KG5UBK) on 7/10/2017 at age 44. I have heard ham radio described as the greatest hobby in the world, and I do not disagree.

Hobbies. I have a lot of them. I thrive on learning new things and putting technology to work. I have described myself as a serial hobbyist, and it was another hobby that let me to ham radio. I play guitar (and hack around on other instruments) and write songs. (I put out an indie album titled Big Six Consultant way back in 2004; it will make your ears bleed!) I used to homebrew beer, and I built a kegerator for my homebrew that would fit nine 5-gallon kegs, outfitting an old chest freezer with a thermostat and 6 taps. I have dabbled in winemaking. I make my own smoked sausage. My brother and I just had an 8-foot tall by 4 foot wide by 4-foot-deep smokehouse custom welded so we can make 200 lbs. at a time! I have made my own cheese. I hunt, I fish, I kayak, I kayak fish... And I fly drones -- FPV (first-person view, with goggles on my face and a camera mounted on the drone) quadcopters.

It was the drone piloting that led me to amateur radio, or at least it got me to sit for the tech test. I was religiously watching every YouTube video that Joshua Bardwell uploaded back then, learning everything I could about how to build and fly the things. I was entranced by the videos other pilots like Le Drib, MattyStuntz, Skitzo FPV and NURK FPV were posting to YouTube. In one video, I learned that some of the transmitters on drones were sending video on frequencies that you need a ham radio license to use and I decided to go for it. I wanted to keep it legal, and it sounded like it might be fun to learn about.

I had been a bit of a communications geek since my youth, getting into all things computer and early on connected with the world and got to know a lot of fellow geeks. I learned at a conference that a lot of these folks ran CB base stations before spinning up their BBSes. I thought back, and some of the best Internet guys I had worked with at Compaq were also hams. I was intrigued, and it felt like learning more about radio would be a bit like learning about the origins of the Internet, or the people who built it. When I started, studying for the ham exam almost seemed to me like an act of respect for my mentors.

I do IT for a living, and part of my previous IT job was designing and implementing Wi-Fi networks. I'd learned a little bit about radio (about propagation at really high frequencies) through that. I thought that learning about radio in general would help increase my understanding in that space as well. And I'm happy to say that it has.

While studying, I bought a Baofeng UV-5R and started listening. That's all it took to make me want to play. I now have a mobile VHF/UHF rig in the car, and an HF base station at home with a (very) makeshift antenna. I've talked on SSB to Japan, Germany, etc. I recently plugged my computer into my radio and did my first-ever contest. I'm excited to try FT8 (soon!). And I have been blessed to fall in with such an awesome radio club, where I have been honored to serve on the board as Corresponding Secretary for the last three years. It has been, and continues to be, a wonderful ride. The world's greatest hobby turns out to be a pretty good fit for a serial hobbyist.

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, WM5N
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>

May 2021

Dayton Hamvention

Xenia, OH

CANCELLED

June 2021

Ham-Com, Plano, TX

CANCELLED permanently

06/17/2022 - 06/18/2022

Radio Fiesta

Location: Schertz, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: San Antonio Radio Club

Website: <https://w5sc.org/>

07/10/2021 - 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 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

VOLUME 45, ISSUE 5

MAY 2021

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

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

May 13, BVARC General Membership Meeting



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