



BVARC BEACON



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

MAY 2022

VOLUME 46 ISSUE 5

General Membership Meeting notice

Thursday, May 12, 7:00 PM

Via Zoom

Link info is forthcoming as the event approaches via the BVARC Reflector and WWW.BVARC.ORG

Bob Heil, K9EID - Audio Ideas



MUSEUM SHIPS WEEKEND June 3rd to June 5th, 2022

From Friday June 3 to Sunday June 5, the historic ships at Seawolf Park on Pelican Island, in Galveston, will come to life as part of an annual worldwide event to commemorate their service. The destroyer escort USS Stewart will be manned by BVARC hams communicating with up to 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, will 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.

Two or three operating positions are planned with SSB and CW modes available. Those members volunteering for overnight shifts will be able to sleep in the ship's stern berth.

There will be a main meal onboard the Stewart, on Saturday evening.

Check out the link below for more information on the event and the list of activated ships:

<http://www.nj2bb.org/museum/>

To sign up for a shift(s) or obtain more information, contact Mark Janzer – K5MGJ at K5MGJ@YAHOO.COM

Those that sign up with Mark will have their admission fee waived and have free parking.

If not at the ships – work us, N5FKP (and the other ships) on the air – we'll be on the HF bands, mostly on 20 meters.

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 continued future activity. This allows us, in our own way, to honor those who served their country at sea and to support Galveston Parks.

The Prez Says

It just seemed like the first of the year was only weeks ago. We are already through three months of the year, and it seems like it will not slow down. That is what it is like as you get older. However, the one thing that has not gotten older are innovative ideas and happenings at BVARC.

Two weeks ago, BVARC held its first tailgate only event in over 20 years. It was a great success for its first time. There is more information in the newsletter about the GHTG. I do want to bring up a little history of the tailgates and ham fests in the area.

If you may remember, BVARC used to have monthly tailgates in the parking lot at Murphy Road and Hwy 59 in the 1990's. Back then it was a remarkable success and was growing each month. Unfortunately, due to issues (some known, and some were unknown) the tail gate stopped. Then a group with-in BVARC held the Humble HamFest for three years. Unfortunately, that faded away as well. I did a little research and found out about the Houston Ham Conventions that were in the 1970's through the 1990's. Here is info I found on the web.

"In 1976, K5RC, K5MA and K7BV decided we needed a convention of contesters in Houston. The first event was the TACO Convention of 1976. From that was spawned Houston Ham Conventions, which sponsored ARRL Texas State Conventions culminating with the 1983 ARRL National Convention."

Imagine that the ARRL National Convention was held in Houston. Unbelievable! Unfortunately, the Houston Ham Convention ended in the mid 1990's and that was when BVARC started their parking lot tailgates (I know I have missed other tailgates and ham fests in the area, but it is hard to list them all).

Houston has been tough on ham fests and tailgates over the last 30 years. Hopefully, with the introduction of the Greater Houston TailGate and the return of the Greater Houston HamFest next year, we can bring the popular events back to life. With these two events, we can help bring back the great times in amateur radio! Do not forget the Baytown HamFest on May 6th and 7th.

Mark your calendars for the upcoming events:

General Meeting – Zoom – Thursday, 7:00 pm, May 12th
Museum Ships Weekend – Friday, June 3rd through Sunday, June 5
General Meeting – In Person – Thursday, 7:00 pm, June 9th
Field Day – Duhacsek Park – Friday, June 24th to Sunday, June 26th
General Meeting – In Person/Zoom – Thursday, 7:00 pm July 14th

Bob Heil, K9EID - Audio Ideas
Annual Event - Galveston
Field Day Prep & Planning
ARRL Annual Event
James Webb Space Telescope

Busy time coming up so get your radios warmed up and get ready!

73
N5VCX



April VE - FCC TESTING SESSIONS RESULTS

For Saturday, April 9th, we had 14 candidates and conducted 24 tests.

New Licensee:

J. Tate (General)
J. Saenz (Technician)
J. Peirce (Technician)
C. Edwards (Technician)
J. Weller (Technician)
J. Kolb (Technician)
P. Waller (Technician)
J. Adams (Technician)

Upgrades:

KI5UBM (General)
KI5UBL (General)
K1HRG (General)
KF5GDS (General)
KF5PPG (Extra)

The VEs in attendance – K5LJ, WX5KR, KI5NPL, K5GDL and W5VCX. Thanks!

For the BVARC Tailgate on April 16th, we had 5 candidates and conducted 7 tests

Upgrades:

KI5USB (General)
KI5USK (Extra)
KI5PWL (General)

A GREAT, thank you to the VEs in attendance – K5LJ, K5GOL, WX5KR, K5LER and N5EKW!

Congratulations to all!

The next BVARC test session is **Saturday, May 7th at 10:30**, at the Bayland Park community Center

The new fee schedule is now in effect. All test candidates pay \$15 at the test session. An additional \$35 license fee (totaling \$50), will be collected by the FCC separately, **for new licensees. Upgrades do not pay the extra amount.**

Youth Licensing Incentive Program

The ARRL is creating a youth program (18 and under) to defray the licensing costs to a total of \$5 (deducting the \$35 increase and \$10 off the \$15 VE session fee). The ARRL program has not yet been implemented, so VE sessions aren't equipped to handle these youth price reductions. Stay tuned for this program.

Also, BVARC is about to implement it's own program for **youth** licensing, starting at the May 7th session.

We'll provide a **new VHF/UHF transceiver (Baofeng, limited supply)** at the VE session, to youth that successfully pass their Technician test. This is the result of a very generous grant from a BVARC member (THANKS!)

So, bottom line, a young person with \$5, can walk into a test session and walk out with a new radio and a pending license.

MINUTES
Board of Directors Meeting
Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club
April 9, 2022 9:00 AM
Via Videoconference

Members Present:

Mike Hardwick N5VCX
(President)

Jimmy Vance NA5D (Vice
President)

David Ely N5EKW
(Treasurer)

Jeff Greer W5JEF (Cor.
Secretary)

Scott Medbury KD5FBA (2
yr at large director)

Anthony Morones (2 yr at
large director)

John Chauvin
K5IZO(Parliamentarian)

Ron Litt K5HM

Chris Luppens KG5BBF

Recorded by Mark McGrath N5VCM Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order: The President called the meeting to order at 9:04 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: Agenda approved:
5. Emergency business. None.
6. Approval of Minutes: March minutes approved.
7. Approval of Treasurer's Report: Approved as presented.
8. Corresponding Secretary: Report approved as presented.
9. Old Business:
 - Upcoming general membership meetings. April – Walter Holmes-digital communications. May – Heil Microphones. June – field day prep. July – space telescope presentation.
 - Update on Greater Houston Tailgate 2022
10. New Business:
 - Discussion of newsletter mailing issues.
11. Next BoD Meeting Date: TBD.
12. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned 9:35 AM.



Pump Handle Key

Is this named after our own Pump Handle, Ambrose Pump Handle Fawcett, WA5CYI? Actually though "Pump" is one of BVARC's most senior members, this key is from Circa 1902, so even Pump doesn't pre-date it. The nickname is obviously because it looks like an old timey hand pump. The handle is tapped to the side as the operator wishes. This predated the Telegraphy changing key, the original Vibroplex Bug, to relieve Telegrapher's Paralysis. We now know that this is Carpel Tunnel Syndrome.



The Feed Point

Getting to Know Your Fellow Members of BVARC

Hello World! 😊, this is Walter Holmes, K5WH. Being a native Houstonian, I have lived all over the city at one time or another, but currently living in NW Houston. After my last 36 years working for a little start-up company called Compaq Computer Corp., that later merged with Hewlett Packard, it was great to retire from there almost 4 years ago and spend a lot more time with many radio projects and helping others dive into this great hobby.

I got my Novice license back in early 1977 as WD5GAZ, and quickly went to Tech, General, and then Advanced, and parked there for many years. But when the Vanity license program was starting back up, that was just the motivation I needed to get the Extra knocked out and I became K5WH.

In my earliest ham radio days, CW was my passion for the first couple of years. Then I finally decided to see what the microphone was to be used for. Building simple wire antennas for each band was great fun and worked well for my curiosity of understanding all the magic behind this stuff.

In the early 80's, as packet radio was just starting to get some attention, we could only get on the air after building from the kits that TAPR made available. That was my real launchpad of interest into merging digital operations with ham radio, and communicating across town, and around the world via HF gateways. Working with a countless number of groups across Texas, we built a very extensive network of Packet digipeaters that really brought the state together.

Ever since that time, I have made it a mission to search for and understand any new digital mode that was possible and share that experience with others to help expose these new technologies for all of us to enjoy. Whether we were using simple RTTY modes, or more complicated modes like Pactor, Amtor, Kamtor, and later PSK31, and even later into Olivia, Thor, and so many other strange sounding modes.

Fast forward to today, I spend most of my time on FreeDV digital voice on HF, as well as FT8, and FT4, both terrestrially and through the satellites also. Chasing contacts via the LEO satellites are always great fun, and a fantastic way to have computer control of the radio and rotor to test your ability to hit a moving target with wonderful conversations.

I also do a lot with other digital modes like DMR, Fusion, and Dstar. You can find us on the Amsat DMR talkgroup 98006, Fusion US-Amsat reflector 11689, and Dstar REFSAT, DCSSAT, XRFSAT, and XLXSAT, all on module C. I have built several repeaters for analog, VHF and UHF analog as the Compaq/HP repeaters, on the air today, but more lately working on multi-mode repeaters to support analog, DMR, Fusion, and Dstar.

Mentoring and helping/assisting hams in almost every capacity is certainly where my cycles are spent these days. This was the primary reason I put together a Zoom channel 4 years ago, to provide quick relief for those trying to understand so much of this hobby at a fast pace, along with live demonstrations of how to make all this happen, every day and night. It's a great place to meet many other hams from all over the world, try some new tricks with your radios, and get the exposure to some things you may not have thought you would be interested in. Join us at <http://www.k5wh.net/zoom/> and see what's happening tonight.

This article's editor's note: I often speak to new hams about finding an Elmer (mentor) to help you through the rough spots and to gain a wider perspective. Walter Holmes is a terrifically helpful Elmer, so when you see him, be sure to thank him for his dedication to helping fellow hams.

Where in the World is...

Djibouti (J2)

CQ Zone 37 ITU Zone 48

Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa, is a mostly French- and Arabic-speaking country of dry shrublands, volcanic formations and Gulf of Aden beaches. In other words, desert.

Though small, Djibouti is strategically located on the northeast coast of the [Horn of Africa](#). It is situated on the [Bab el Mandeb Strait](#), which lies to the east and separates the [Red Sea](#) from the [Gulf of Aden](#).

Formerly known as French Somaliland (1896–1967)

and the French Territory of the Afars and Issas (1967–77), the country took Djibouti as its name when it gained independence from [France](#) on June 27, 1977. Djibouti's capital, Djibouti city, is built on coral reefs that jut into the southern entrance of the Gulf of Aden.



In the early 20th century, it was Oslo, in the 40s it was Casablanca and in the 50s it was Berlin. Today one could argue that the world's spy capital is the little-known African nation of Djibouti.

The rugged, sunbaked nation in the Horn of Africa is now home to one of the largest concentrations of foreign military bases on earth. Over the last decade, the nation of less than a million people has become a microcosm of the new world order. It has become a nest of spies, a place where the old Western powers vie for influence against the rising might of China.



The regular cheese and wine night at the Kempinski Hotel overlooking the azure waters of the port sucks in all manner of diplomats, military contractors and soldiers, except, it seems, the Chinese. Relations are peaceful but surveillance is everywhere. "Everyone knows what you're doing. You have to get used to nothing being private," says a foreign diplomat. "Everyone here conspires. It's the national pastime."

The tiny African nation of Djibouti is a gateway to the Suez Canal, one of the world's busiest shipping routes. Its port is the lifeblood of its economy, providing the biggest source of income and employment in this otherwise barren country. Djibouti's proximity to restive areas in Africa and the Middle East and its relative stability have made it a prized location for foreign military bases and ensured a steady flow of foreign assistance. The people of Djibouti are mostly Muslim. Islam is observed by 94% of Djibouti's population (about 740,000) (2010 estimate). The remaining six percent follow Christianity.

The Republic of Djibouti names Islam as the only [state religion](#). The Constitution of 1992 provides for the equality of citizens of all faiths as well as the freedom to practice any religion.

The country also hosts America's largest military base in Africa, China's first overseas military base and Japan's first military base since the Second World War. Djibouti serves as the main gateway for trade for its giant neighbor, Ethiopia.



The people of Djibouti are mostly Muslim. Islam is observed by 94% of Djibouti's population (about 740,000) (2010 estimate). The remaining six percent follow Christianity. The bulk of the population is classified as urban with most of the population living in the capital, Djibouti City.

Djibouti is very hot. With rainless summers and a very warm winter season. Sunshine is abundant in the city, averaging eight to ten hours a day year-round. So, bring lots of sun block.

According to ARRL, recent attempts to secure operating permissions and equipment authorizations have proven to be unsuccessful due to governmental "red tape". It is strongly recommended that you contact the national telecommunications authority contact@djiboutitelecom.dj if you wish to operate in Djibouti. In 2019, the J20DX IOTA DXpedition was expected to be active on two islands in Djibouti. After four

days of frustration with local red tape and government bureaucracy the operators threw in the towel and returned home.



Searching QRZ.com, there appears to be some past amateur activities in Djibouti. Check out IK2CIO in his recent trip. He operated as V20FT in country. Some operations appear to be club stations operated by various military units.

Despite the difficulties, Club Log lists the country as 120 on the most wanted DX list.

Reporting from the Dark Side,
Ron Litt, K5HM



BVARC Volunteer Examiner Team Transitioning to Computer Based Testing

The NEW Technician test question pool will be implemented on July 1st. In the past, we'd print out a bunch of paper tests and continue processing the voluminous paper forms, scanning and sending to the ARRL-VEC.

Instead, the BVARC VE team is taking this opportunity to transition to computer based testing (CBT) beginning, earliest, at our June 11th session. No, not remote testing. As a policy, we'd still have in-person sessions with a minimum of 3 VEs attending.

The ARRL-VEC has (for a while now) sanctioned the use of Exam Tools to conduct CBT sessions. BVARC has been officially approved by ARRL-VEC for on-line testing.

The goal is no paper, templates or pens...

If you are a VE or would like to become a VE and help out, this is a great opportunity to learn this new process. It's much better that paper and pen – and very secure. The digital file generated by the session can be easily processed by the VEC and can result in licensees issued the SAME day (if submitted on a weekday).

We'll be familiarizing the VE team via several ZOOM meetings over the next month. Contact K5MGJ to sign up.

Examination sessions are held each month, usually on the same day as the Saturday BVARC Board meeting (most times, the first Saturday of the month). 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: k5mgi@yahoo.com to pre-register.

Memories of My Friend Earl Ross Lawler Jr., W5HFF (SK)

Ross and I became fast friends around 2000 when we both worked for the same company. I thank Ross for being heavily influential in getting me to return to amateur radio and to join BVARC. He did many amateur radio things, often thinking and doing a lot outside the box. For example, he used an Acom amplifier at his home; possibly the only Acom used in BVARC. He also did a lot of experimenting with antennas, especially wire antennas such as loops.

Ross received a BS Degree in Physics while on full scholarship from St. Mary's University. His father (W5JLY) influenced his scientific career pursuit and Ross becoming a ham. Ross was very technically inclined and knowledgeable and this manifested itself many times in amateur radio. He was highly regarded among his career peers, amateur radio operators, church members (he was an Elder), his family and by many-many friends and acquaintances. He did a tour in the U S Air Force (and The Texas National Guard) in a critical capacity and spent his career in similar complex engineering projects, mostly in the offshore industry. Almost everyone that met Ross liked him.

Things he did for me as a friend are innumerable. A typical example is that he took several overnight trips to my East TX cabin (3+ hour drive each way) to help install antennas and equipment. I know he did these kinds of things for many fellow hams. We did many non-ham things together, and my family thoroughly enjoyed his presence.

In 1998, he Joined BVARC and held a Lifetime Membership. He was very active and held various formal offices, including Corresponding Secretary/Treasurer, VP and many terms as Board member. In 2003 he was presented the BVARC Appreciation Award and in 2004 he was presented the BVARC Order of the Key Award (BVARC's highest award). He was the Club Elmer for many years and the trustee for the club call (KK5W) from 2009 until his passing.

Ross was very active in Field Day, co-chairing it for several years. He helped with many of its aspects, often with rigging antennas, and operating. He was a tower climber par excellence. At FD, he was predominantly a nighttime op, and usually brought some still hot freshly baked goods for the midnight shift made by his wife (until her passing in 2011). He was equally proficient in voice modes and CW. At one Field Day, he couldn't get the xcvr to work, so he turned a paddle on its side and used one side as a straight key.

When I visited in his declining years, I could see he remained mentally sharp. He wanted to communicate and operate under physical duress but eventually it became impossible.

He was a true friend indeed. RIP my friend!

W5HFF de K5IZO 73 ●●●--●--



Ross climbing a tower
Location unknown

Greater Houston TailGate Wrap-up

If you missed the Greater Houston TailGate that is unfortunate since it was a remarkable success. Due to COVID issues and other items the Greater Houston HamFest was not held this year. Instead, the Greater Houston Tailgate was held in its place in April. So, with a few weeks of planning, the event was organized, and plans put into motion. Duhacsek Park in Sugar Land was selected as a location since we would have plenty of space for the event.

The event had approximately two hundred participants and twenty-five tailgaters. With the success of this event, there is a chance that the club will have another tailgate later in the year, possible on the second weekend in November. So, keep checking the web site and newsletter.

The Grand Prize Winner was Andrew Oswald, KI5NYJ, from the Woodlands. Andrew won an Icom IC2730A which he has already put in his Honda. I want to Thank Andrew for coming out to the GHTG. I hope he makes it out to the GHHF in March and he can win a new radio again!

Speaking of the GHHF, everybody mark their calendars for March 3rd and 4th, for the 2023 event. There will be an organizational meeting in May for the GHHF. Details will be posted on the website and the e-mail reflector. So, keep your eye open for the notification.

Again, thanks to everyone that helped on the first Greater Houston Tailgate!

N5VCX



BVARC Rag Chew Net

Due to space limitations, this info will show up in next month's issue as a 2 month report.



Hamfests

(typically within 200 miles of Houston)

06/17/2022 - 06/18/2022

Radio Fiesta

Location: Schertz, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: San Antonio Radio Club

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

07/09/2022

Tidelands Hamfest

Location: Texas City, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Tidelands Amateur Radio Society

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



Editor's Note: The list of officers, advertising info and eating info is not published every issue. Please go to www.bvarc.org for this information or look at a recent past issue.

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, N5PRD@yahoo.com

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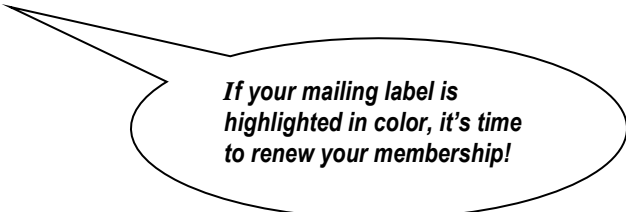
May 2022

**BRAZOS VALLEY
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FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

May 12, 2022 – General Membership Meeting

June 3, 4 & 5, 2022 – Museum Ships Weekend



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