



the
B-VARC BULLETIN

of
Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
Ft. Bend and Harris Counties, Texas

Vol. 6, No. 10

October 1983

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OUR PRESIDENT SAYS --

The Club has 4 major events coming up in the near future. The first is running the transmitter hunt at the ARRL National Convention. Mark WB5RDK and Barry N5FAB are the coordinators. We have a much better handle on the event this year, thanks to support of the convention Board of Directors who gave us 2 outstanding prizes, publicity, and a registration table. Good luck to all those participating in the event.

Next is the nationwide Simulated Emergency Test (SET) on October 15 &/or 16. Club members are urged to participate in this exercise and to check into the ARES Net at 8:30PM on October 10 for a wrapup of details.

Then, at the November membership meeting, officers for 1984 and a 3-year term Director At Large will be elected. It is of utmost importance that ALL Club members consider candidates for these positions, not only of themselves but also of others they would like to have in those spots; and so advise a member of the Nominating Committee: Wade Eilers WN5TEN, Bob Spradling W5UBD, and Stu Lamkin WB5IGG. Good leadership is necessary to continue the Club's growth in activities and interests.

And finally, there is the annual banquet which will be held at the Swing-ing Door Restaurant again. Please be prepared to get your tickets early, beginning at the November membership meeting. Details will be forthcoming.

See y'all at the Convention.

73, Steve Gottlieb WA5OEN.

FCC AUTHORIZES VOLUNTEER AMATEUR EXAMS

From W5YI Report

In a landmark decision, the Commission has adopted a Report and Order establishing volunteer testing (both preparation and administration of exams) for Amateur Radio Operator licenses above the Novice Class level. This change will offset the limitations and opportunities for Amateurs to take the examinations that have resulted from funding and personnel cutbacks within the FCC.

The exams at present are administered by FCC personnel- usually at Field Operations Bureau offices. In some areas they are now given only once a year and the number of remote locations has been reduced.

Legislation (Public Law 97-259) signed into law by President Reagan on September 13, 1982 authorized the FCC to use licensed amateurs on a voluntary and uncompensated basis to prepare and administer amateur exams. Barry Goldwater, K7UGA, was basically the author (Senate Bill 929) of the amateur volunteer program.

The American Radio Relay League, an organization of amateur radio operators, proposed a plan for use of amateur examiners in a petition to the FCC in October of 1982. Under the program, individuals and organizations would propose questions for all examinations based on the FCC study guide for the Amateur Radio Operator Licence Examination. The FCC would then issue lists of approved questions which it will draw on for exams.

The Report and Order adopted September 22nd at the FCC Commissioners provides for written examinations to be administered by three person teams of examiners who will report to regional Volunteer Examiner Coordinators. (VEC) The VEC's will assist in an orderly flow of information to and from the Commission, coordinate the efforts of volunteer examiners and minimize the likelihood of fraud and abuse.

The big surprise is that the FCC departed from their original proposal and has decided to substitute regional VEC's for nationwide VEC's.... "to get a significant amount of participation in this program." The regions will coincide exactly with the present amateur licensing call sign districts. There will be thirteen districts - 1 through 0 plus the Pacific, Alaska and Atlantic (non-contiguous USA) areas.

The FCC is seeking groups to undertake volunteer examination coordination for each district. Ray Kowalski, FCC Chief, Special Services, Washington, DC, said that it is possible that one main regional VEC group could have sub-groups or clubs to assist them in carrying out their duties- particularly in large districts.

Specific qualifications to participate in the volunteer program are spelled out to avoid any conflicts of interest. Abandoned was the concept of an examining team chief although three volunteer examiners are required. All Morse Code tests and the Advanced and Extra Class exams must be given by a team consisting of Extra Class licensees. Element 3 (General and Technician Class Theory) can be administered by three Advanced Class amateur examiners.

FCC AUTHORIZES VOLUNTEER AMATEUR EXAMS (Cont.)

The mechanics of the new volunteer testing program involves a complete new sub-part of the rules. The Commission rules that no expenses could be recouped--a key demand by the ARRL as a prerequisite for their becoming the national ham radio exam coordinator. In other words, neither the actual volunteer examiner can be compensated nor may the VEC seek to defray expenses. As things stand now, all costs including printing of tests must be borne by the volunteer examiners themselves.

This action does not in any way change the procedures recently adopted for the use of volunteers in the preparation and administration of examinations for the Novice Class of Amateur Radio Operator License--PR Docket 82-727. The new Volunteer Examiner Program (PR Docket 83-27) Report and Order which covers Technician through Extra--Class has not yet been released by the Commission. This will take about two weeks and we anticipate doing a complete wrap up on the program in our next newsletter-- including a recap of the new Part 97 rules.

ARRL-INTERVIEWED--VOLUNTEER EXAMS

The first person I called after I got the word from the FCC about volunteer testing being approved was Dave Summer (K1ZZ), General Manager of the ARRL. I wanted to get his reaction to the rulemaking.

(Fred/W5YI)- It appears that the regional VEC concept more or less precludes the ARRL from becoming the nationwide coordinator for ham radio testing...

(Dave/K1ZZ)- Actually that is not the case. What they have done is... to broaden the potential Examiner Coordinators in the event ARRL chose not to play. We asked a specific question at the meeting, "Does that mean we would have to negotiate 13 separate (VEC) agreements for 13 regions and the answer to that was 'No, we would not.'" The Commission did not want to be bound to dealing only with organizations that were capable of providing national coordination. They wanted to expand the universe of potentially available VEC's to include organizations that might only be able to do it on a call area basis. ...The problems associated with a regional approach are not dramatically different from the problems associated with doing it at the national level. You don't really gain anything by trying to do it on a regional basis. My feeling, speaking as ARRL General Manager, is that the national approach is still the more workable of the two.

(W5YI)- Will the League contest the regional VEC approach with a Petition for Reconsideration?

(K1ZZ)- That depends on what the Report and Order says. Our understanding is that negotiating a single agreement covering the national level is not precluded by the Commission's action. If this is the case, we certainly would not see any problem...

(W5YI)- Do you feel that the ARRL will become the nationwide VEC?

(K1ZZ)- Based on what I understand of the Commission's action yesterday, I don't believe that the FCC's action diminished our interest in it. We do have an obstacle to be overcome with respect to expense reimbursement but I believe that we are going to overcome that obstacle. It is not insurmountable.

ARRL INTERVIEWS--VOLUNTEER EXAM (Cont.)

(W5YI)- My understanding is that the FCC is not going to allow VEC's to defray costs of the volunteer testing program. The ARRL comments specifically demanded this as a prerequisite for their VEC participation.

(K1ZZ)- Our feeling was that for this to be a viable program there would have to be some mechanism for recouping the expenses of the program in order for it to work regardless of who does the coordination. This rulemaking really did not address the issue of expense recoupment. That is not to say that there are not efforts underway to get around that particular obstacle and in fact, efforts are under way and we have Commission support for this effort.

(Editor's Note:) The Minutes of the ARRL Executive Committee meeting held at League headquarters on September 10th read: "Counsel Imlay reported on recent discussions with FCC staff concerning the specific legislation the Commission would support to enable volunteer examiner coordinators to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses. ...it was unanimously voted... to proceed with the drafting and introduction of enabling legislation to permit FCC to authorize volunteer examiner coordinators to recoup reasonable expenses incurred in program administration.")

(W5YI)- Do you feel that amateur radio clubs and/or hamfests would be willing to underwrite the expense of amateur exams?

(K1ZZ)- I am sure that at the local level there is a general willingness on the part of the amateur community to absorb some expenses connected with the program. A hamfest committee would have to be crazy not to be willing to absorb the incidental expenses associated with having exams given at their hamfest. That has got to be one of the best drawing cards for attendance that they can have.

(W5YI)- Is the ARRL still interested in becoming the national coordinator for amateur radio examinations?

(K1ZZ)- Definitely! We haven't seen the document yet, but based on our present understanding of what the Report and Order says, the answer is 'Yes!'.

(W5YI)- How would the ARRL go about appointing or selecting regional VEC's in each call district? Would they do this?

(K1ZZ)- It would be speculative for me to comment on that. It is not clear at the moment that that would be necessary. We have only been aware of the regional VEC concept for 24 hours.

(W5YI)- What do you think about the requirement that all code exams plus Advanced and Extra class theory be administered by Extra Class licensees only and the Tech/General theory by Advanced Class holders?

(K1ZZ)- That is permitted ~~by~~ under public Law 97-259. The initial program plans that we drew up here were a little bit tighter.

Our initial reaction is that this is not going to create a problem.

(W5YI)- Do you feel that any group or individual other than an ARRL entity will come forward and volunteer to be a regional VEC? How would the League handle this?

(K1ZZ)- I certainly would not rule out the possibility. It is more of a question of how would the Commission handle it. We certainly are prepared for that eventuality. We are not approaching this on the basis that it has to be exclusively ARRL or we don't play.

(W5YI)- What do you see as an implementation date for the ham community assuming amateur radio examinations.

(K1ZZ)- We will be trying to resolve the situation as soon as

ARRL INTERVIEWS---VOLUNTEER EXAM (Cont.)

possible once the Report and Order is actually out. We certainly will be working to respond to it. If I were to guess, I'd say around the first of the year, and that is for the Technician-General. Different classes would be implemented at different times. Advance and Extra would follow somewhat later.

(W5YI)- There have been those that have said that if the ARRL became the national VEC, that this would give them an unfair study material publishing advantage.

(K1ZZ)- Based on a transcript of the Commission meeting yesterday, I think that that point was addressed within the Report and Order. There will be a 'chinese wall' built between two separate sets of personnel that get involved in the exam coordination and ~~those involved in the exam coordination and~~ those involved in the preparation of study material in order to avoid the appearance of an unfair access to information.

(W5YI)- Is the League as interested in selling study materials as it is in being a VEC?

(K1ZZ)- I don't think I would use the kind of emphasis that you used. We have always been interested in the educational aspect of amateur radio. We certainly intend to continue in that area because it is part of our charter. I wouldn't tie the two together that closely.

(W5YI)- Is it conceivable that the League might recommend other than ARRL originated study materials?

(K1ZZ)- That is an interesting question. I guess in fairness, I couldn't rule out the possibility. What we are trying to do is to strive to provide first class study material to prospective amateurs. We have found that most effective way of doing that is to publish it ourselves. Certainly, if we were to come across a text that seems to respond particularly well in a particular area, we would not hesitate to recommend it. I think you will find cases where that has occurred in the past.

(W5YI)- In order to eliminate any question of conflict of interest is it possible that the ARRL might publish study materials and make them available on a 'cost basis?'

(K1ZZ)- The problem that we have run into there is more of a question of competitive advantage. Putting myself in the shoes of a commercial publisher, I would much rather compete with material that is being supplied with a price tag that is more like what I would have to charge ^{them} someone that provides it at cost. We keep the cost of our published materials low largely by volume. The people in the field giving the exam will have no connection with the production of study material.

--From W5YI Report

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The meeting was called to order by WA5OEN at 7:34 pm. with a standing rollcall.

Chris Armatta KA5PWZ announced that he had recently upgraded to Technician Class.

Our congratulations to Chris on this achievement. (Chris is ten years old)

Guests joining us for the meeting were K5BY/Bill Shoots of CLEAR LAKE CLEARS COORD. and N5FQS/Paul Brooks.

REPORTS;

The Minutes of the August meeting and the Treasurer's report were accepted as submitted and printed in the September issue of the B-VARC Bulletin.

--Continued on page 6

Minutes Sept. Meeting (Cont.)

W5WVX reported on the activities of the SOUTH WEST AREA ARES. New 'MART' team sheets are now available. IMPORTANT: A new ARES form must be completed by all who wish to participate in the SW Area ARES activities. This new form must be filled out for a police security check. Those who filled out forms prior to September 8th must do so again.

N5HF reported that the MERA J-Pole Fund raising project will be seeking helpers to construct the antennas.

W5UBD reported that the WA5ACF/Repeater is operational on 144.65/145.25 MHz (-600) pending a new frequency allocation. MERA is said to be second in line for a new pair of frequencies. Tom Casey/WA5ACF has submitted his resignation as Vice-Chairman of MERA due to business reasons. The MERA Board has appointed Ron Bolyard/KA5GYG to fill the vacancy (effective September 6, 1983).

KA5GYG reported that the SET (Simulated Emergency Test) 83 is scheduled for Oct. 15-16. Mark down the date and consider what way(s) and how shall we participate.

WA5OEN reports that the ARRL Convention Officials has given B-VARC public relations space at the Convention. Steve has asked for B-VARC members to spend time at the space and to promote the club. Also, N5KV is seeking "proctors" for the FCC exams. Any volunteers?

There was no unfinished business. NEW BUSINESS: WA5OEN asked for a volunteer to organize the January banquet. WA5GAZ said he would contact the Swining Door about group prices.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm followed by a program by W5FJU & K5ZC.

Submitted by L. S. Levy / WD5DRB / Secretary

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER B-VARC MEETING IS WELL ATTENDED -- SEE WHO YOU MISSED - By Larry WD5DRB

Weather did not stop these brave souls from participating in the B-VARC business meeting or enjoying the program presented by W5FJU and K5ZC. Come and join your friends for the October meeting and program by W4WUI / Marty Stebbins of KHOU-TV Channel 11. REMEMBER, THE MEETING WILL BE AT THE MO. CITY PD / CITY HALL.

WA5OEN	W5RNK	WB5SRN	ND5F	W5QBE	N5CHW	WD5GAZ
KZ5I	N5FDH	KA5KDS	KD5XX	K5EST	K5HOY	KA5NYI
KA5GYG	W5WVX	W5UBD	WB5MXX	N5BXP	WN5TEN	N5HF
N5APY	W8QK	KD5GM	WD5DRB	N5APC	KA5PWZ	K5BY *
W5FJU *	N5FQS *	K5ZC *	* = Guest		* = Program speaker	

OCTOBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The location of the October 13 meeting has been changed from the Missouri City Firehouse on FM2234 to the new City building directly across FM2234. We will meet in the Council Chamber immediately to the right after entering the building. As a further identification, the Police Department also is in this building.

Lloyd Phelps WD5HEH has recommended certain changes in the By-Laws and has reviewed them with the Board of Directors. The Board agreed the changes should be made and ordered that they be placed before the membership at the October meeting for consideration and action.

Following are the revised sections of the By-Laws to be considered and acted upon at that meeting. Comparison of these amended wordings with the current By-Laws will show the detailed changes proposed:

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

Section A.2. Family membership, when more than one member of a family is living at a single address.

Section D.3. Non-payment of annual dues by due date.

ARTICLE VI - DUES

Section A.2. Family membership Eight Dollars (\$8.00), plus Two Dollars (\$2.00) for each additional family member.

Section C. Annual dues are due January 1 of each year but may be paid in advance on a one year basis. Non-payment of annual dues by due date shall result in termination of membership.

Following the close of the business portion of the meeting, we'll have Marty Stebbins W4WUI, a well-known member of the Channel 11 KHOU news team and a ham for 27 years, will recount some of his adventures and misadventures along the way. Marty does a great job on camera and we can look forward to an enjoyable talk.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF MEMORIAL EMERGENCY RADIO ASSOCIATION ON SEPT. 6, 1983

Tom Casey WA5ACF reported that the frequency coordinator had assigned the 144.65/145.25 pair to us and said it probably would be about 6 months before we might have another pair assignable in lieu of it.

Bob Spradling W5UBD reported that we have about \$500 in the treasury. Tom WA5ACF suggested that we issue certificates of appreciation to contributors of \$25 or more to the MERA repeater fund. He said he also would get the paper on which the certificates could be printed. Harold Parker ND5F reported on the antenna project. We will build about 120 "J" antennas to sell for about \$7.95 each. It was suggested that we take a donation rather than make an outright sale.

Bill Bates KA5FWF has loaned us a transceiver to serve as a temporary repeater. It was damaged during Hurricane Alicia and we will have it repaired.

The loaned repeater from Corsicana will be put on the ASAP. Tom WA5ACF will get crystals for it, costing about \$50. He will change the selenium rectifiers to silicon rectifiers. Duplexers will come from WACOM and will cost about \$600. Tom WA5ACF has an ID board and a control board, donated by Jim Arnold W5RNK.

--Bob Grady N5DQR

ED Note - We are advised there have been considerable developments since the above meeting which will be reported on in the November issue.

FROM THE EMERGENCY COORDINATOR --

The cities of Ft. Bend County which Southwest ARES supports will be issuing special identification badges to Hams who are a part of the ARES group. To this end, they need some additional information to complete their records. The ARES registration form below has been revised to include this information. Even if you have registered before, we need this information. Please fill out the form and send it immediately to me at 1303 Twining Oaks, Missouri City TX 77489.

A reminder: The Southwest ARES Training Net meets each Monday at 8:30PM on the N5KV repeater, 147.60/00 MHz.. Show your interest by checking in every Monday evening.

Also, the annual simulated emergency test (SET) will be held the week-end of October 15-16. Check in on the Monday 8:30PM nets for details about our participation in the SET.

73, Ed Harwell W5WVX

Name: _____ Call: _____

AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

Address: _____ City _____ Zip: _____

Bus. phone: _____ Home phone: _____ License class: _____

Date of birth: _____ Social Security no: _____ Sex: _____

Race: _____ Drivers license no: _____ State: _____

Check (/) bands/modes you can operate:

	160	80	40	20	15	10	6	2
CW								
FM								
RTTY								
SSB								
MOBILE								

Can your home station operate without commercial power? [] YES [] NO

If yes, what bands? _____

I hereby authorize the cities of Missouri City, Rosenberg, Stafford, and Sugar Land, all in Ft. Bend County, Texas, to make any necessary background investigation in order to qualify me for full participation in Amateur Radio Emergency Service within those Cities and/or County areas.

Signed: _____ Date _____

MERA FUNDING PROGRESSES

Bob Spradling W5UBD

We're pleased to report that funds for the Memorial Emergency Radio Association (MERA) repeater are accumulating, thanks to contributions from individuals who are interested in helping get this vital link in the emergency communications capabilities in this area in service as quickly as possible. Those from whom contributions have been received to date are:

Carter Beghtol KD5XX	Jon Hill N5BHQ	Ray Morphey K5EST
Ron Bolyard KA5GYG	Stu Lamkin WB5IGG	Sam Petty KA5EPN
Tom Casey WA5ACF	Vic La Rocca K5KNH	Bob Spradling W5UBD
Henry Freedenberg N5HF	Jay Maynard K5ZC	Ed Truitt KD5JC
Steve Gottlieb WA5OEN	Ken McAninch KA5DKS	Bo White W5VKK
Joanne Morphey K5HOY		

Two important facts about the MERA repeater should be kept in mind: The first is that it is NOT a Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club (B-VARC) machine; it IS a Memorial Emergency Radio Association (MERA) repeater and should not be called the "B-VARC repeater." And second, although the performance of the present temporary equipment does not equal that of the 4.85/5.45 machine, the MERA repeater -- 144.65/145.25 -- has good coverage in the southwest area, and not only MERA but also B-VARC members are urged to use it whenever possible in order to demonstrate to the Frequency Coordinator the need for the repeater in this area, and thereby stay on the top of his list of applicants for repeater pairs.

Another funding activity for the MERA repeater is the construction of twin-lead "J" antennas for sale at the ARRL Convention flea market. These antennas are very broad-banded, have excellent gain, and can be used to good advantage by travelers, fixed station operators, and in emergency conditions. Come by the flea market table and get one -- you'll be glad you did!

Also, as a reminder, contributions to the MERA repeater fund are tax-deductible. Make your check payable to the full name of the Association and mail it to me at 12306 Dorrance Lane, Stafford TX 77477.

NEW MEMBER AND NEW ROSTER

A new member joined us prior to the last membership meeting, but such information did not reach Ye Olde Editor until after the September BULLETIN had been printing. He is John "Bo" White W5VKK, and he lives in Baton Rouge. We hope he'll be able to be with us at a membership meeting from time to time.

We did get Bo included in the Second Edition of the 1983 Roster. Your copy with your name on it will be waiting for you at the October meeting on the 13th.

NEW NOVICE CLASS

Our Novice License class had its first session on Wednesday, September 28 with nine students on hand. We understand there are two or three more who could not attend that session but who expect to join the class at its second meeting. I'll be acting as instructor and will be assisted from time to time by Club members who have volunteered to join the instructor pool. Their availability is very much appreciated and will insure that the class won't be delayed if some circumstance arises to make me miss a session.

This is a very good group of students and barring unforeseen problems, I'm sure they'll finish the course, pass the code and theory exams, and join our ham community. I was glad to find there are several good "question askers" in the group. They will liven up the sessions and keep us instructors on our toes!

For the duration of the classes, each student will receive a copy of the Club's monthly newsletter, and we hope they'll join our Club. We invited them to come to our membership meetings and start getting into the ham community stream.

--Wade Eilers WN5TEN

NCS SCHEDULES FOR OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

2M Public - 10/3 ND5F 10/10 WB5RDK 10/17 KD5GM 10/24 N5FAB 10/31 ND5F
Service 11/7 WB5RDK 11/14 KD5GM 11/21 N5FAB 11/28 ND5F

10M Rag - 10/5 WB5IGG 10/12 K5EST 10/19 N5HF 10/26 KA5GYG
Chew 11/2 WB5IGG 11/9 K5EST 11/16 N5HF 11/23 KA5GYG 11/30 WB5IGG

MADISON ELECTRONICS SUPPLY :

1508 McKinney Houston, Tx. 77010 Fone: 658-0268

TO ALL HAMS---

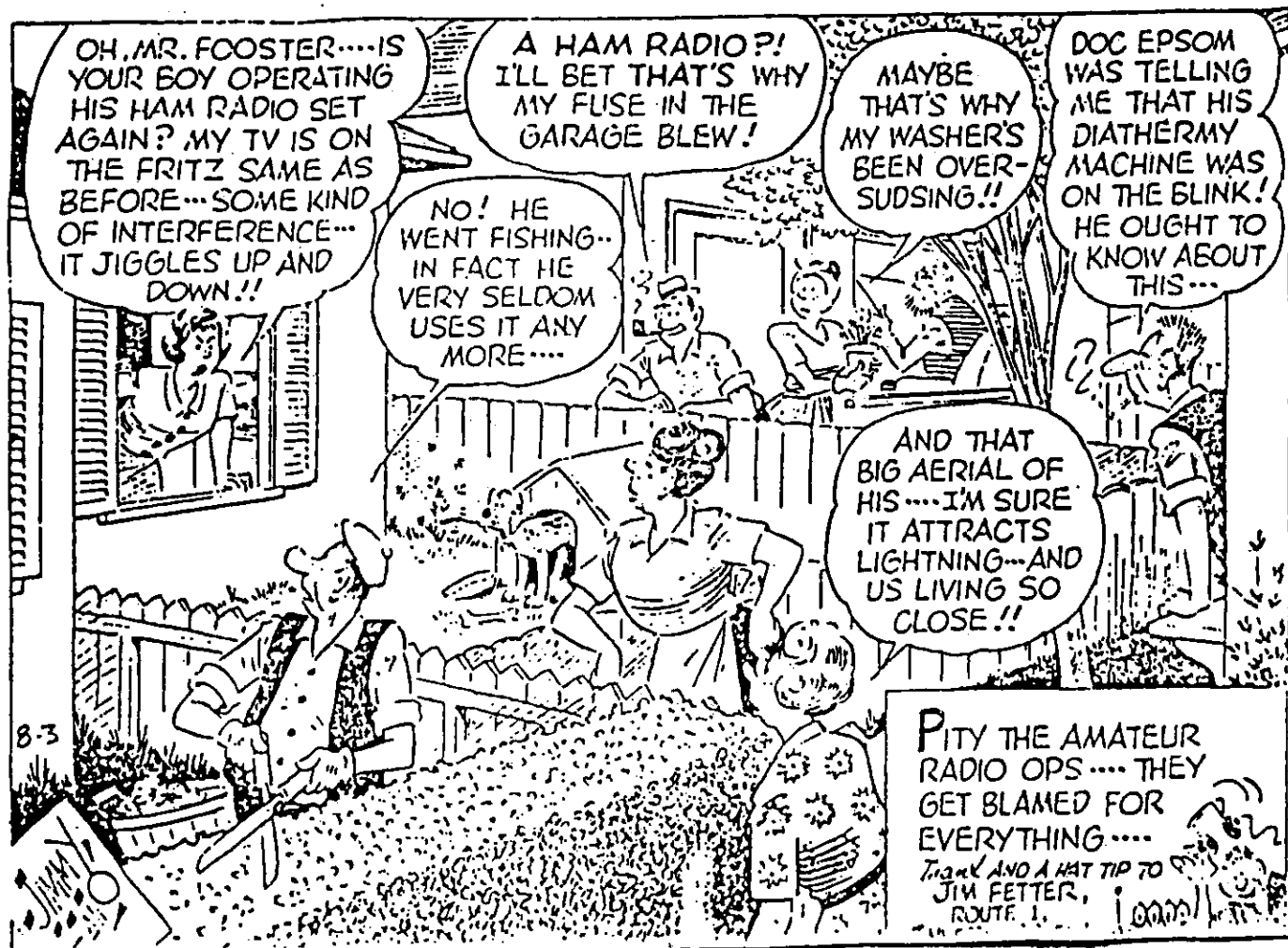
We carry in stock or can order for you any item you want from any major manufacturer of ham gear, including all line accessories and Kenwood service manuals.

Call me, identify yourself and wants, and I'll quote our HOT SPECIAL prices available to you.

73, Don Busick, K5AAD

LEST YE DISREMEMBER -- It's worth \$2.00 to the Club treasury if you join or renew your ARRL membership through the Club. And if you're under 18 or over 64, you yourself will save Five Bucks on the membership fee. Call Lloyd Phelps WD5HEH, Club Treasurer, at 498-2088 as to how to go about it.

THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME :- :- :- by Hatlo



B - S - S MART

- FOR SALE --
1. HAMMERLUND SP-600JX full coverage xcvr, 1.6 - 54 MHz.
 2. NATIONAL NC-183 full coverage xcvr, 540 KHz - 54 MHz.
 3. NATIONAL HRO-60 full coverage xcvr, 1.8 - 30 MHz.
 4. HEATH 401 SSB xmtr, 80M - 10M.
 5. HEATH HG10B VFO, 80M - 2M.
 6. HALLICRAFTERS S-40 full coverage xcvr, 540 KHz - 30 MHz.

Call Bob Grady N5DQR -- Work 977-0202; home 781-5809

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

To act is easy; to think is hard.

--Goethe



FIRST CLASS MAIL

B-VARC BULLETIN
7401 Helms
Houston TX 77074

You probably have some small debt to local hams, and you'll probably never even know it. Amateur radio operators, called hams, turned out a battalion of volunteers during Alicia to help local officials. Then they quietly disappeared. If you were listening in the early morning hours, as the winds built higher, you heard news reports of police and sheriff's offices losing commercial and backup power. Many reports said "The only communications link is with ham radio". They normally occupy only garages and spare bedrooms, with their radio rigs. You may know of several in your neighborhood—they're the ones with the towers and antennas in their back yards. But, whenever they're needed they show up, on a largely unofficial basis. Hams served at weather bureau offices in Galveston and Alvin, at D.P.S. headquarters, and at dozens of shelters throughout the area. We know communication during a hurricane is tough. We appreciate the hams' work. If you see a ham, say "Thanks".

Broadcast on Channel 11 News on August 23, 1983

EDITORIAL