

B-VARC BULLETIN

The Monthly Publication of the
BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
Serving Fort Bend and Harris Counties

Editor-in-Chief: Robert K. Ricketts, N5JKD

About the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club...

Organized in 1977, the club has been growing steadily. It is a gathering place for HAM radio operators in Southwest Harris and Ft. Bend Counties and surrounding communities. It is a general purpose type of HAM club offering a variety of activities open to all interested persons. Membership is open, not only to licensed HAM operators, but also to anyone interested in the hobby. In addition to regularly scheduled membership meetings, the club conducts classes leading to amateur radio licenses each year and sponsors a volunteer examiner team which offers examinations in all levels of HAM licenses each month.

For more detailed information about the club and any of its activities, please call Stu Lamkin, WBSIGG, at (713)777-3345.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

From:

Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
P.O. Box 1630
Missouri City, TX 77459
Telephone (713)777-3345



WBSIGG Lamkin Stu

7401 Heilig
Houston, TX 77074

- D. MS-150 Bike Tour - Saturday
* Sunday Also
- E. Mother's Day
- F. Field Day
- G. Fall Festival
- H. Terry Fox 5K
- I. GAAC 20K
- J. Symphony Classic
- K. Annual Brazos Horse & Buggy
- L. Diamond Walk
- M. Village Five
- N. Braes Interfaith Ministeries
- O. GAAC Cinco Ranch 25K
- P. Houston Post Run
- Q. Mother Hubbard 5K
- R. GAAC Kingwood 30K
- S. Jingle Bell 8K

Sellers, Tom
Steets, Jack
Van Demark, Jack
Walker, George
Wentworth, Gregg
Yales, Steve
Yates, Laura

K5CNU - A,G,H,J,L,P
W5SHZM - E
WN5A - E,F
KQ5W - L
WD5CNM - G
KA5DUU - F,O,P
KA5SGM - F,O,P

Thanks to all who have helped!

Abbott, Brenson	KF5VZ - L,O
Albrecht, Carl	KA5QLQ - E,K
Arnold, Jim	W5RNL - E
Blackwell, A.J.	WA5YSL - I
Borg, Gerry	N5APW - B,C,D,*E,F,N,Q
Cheek, Ralph	KB5DNT - R
DeArmas, Frank	KB5EQG - Q, R
Dillard, Ray	WA5F - (next line)
A,B,C,D,*E,G,I,J,K,L,M,O,P,R,S	
Dunkelberger, Steve	N5JBL - A,B
Dyer, Dave	KA5UXP - E,F,H,I,J,L,R,S
Dyer, Karla	N5LGS - F,H,I,J,L,O,R,S
Eason, Cathy	N5LKU - N,P
Eason, Mike	N5KRU - E,F,N,O
Emery, Bob	N5LJP - K
Ferguson, Mark	WZ5T - F
Freidenberg, Henry	N5HF - A
Gottlieb, Steve	WA5OEN - E
Hagerman, Dick	WB5SRN - (next line)
A,B,C,D,*H,J,L,M,S	
Hammer, Cindy	KB5ERL - R
Hammer, Dave	WJ5B - L,R
Harwell, Ed	W5WVX - K
Holley, Doug	KE5SR - L,P,Q
Jacobs, Donna	KB5DVR - F
Jacobs, Travis	N5DON - F
Jolly, George	ND5E - (next line)
B,C,D,*E,F,J,P,Q,R,S	
Jolly, Kathy	KA5WHK - D,*P,Q,R,S
Kana, Mike	KA5WOT - D,F
Kemp, Bill	KG5CB - E,F
King, Suzanne	KB5BAY - D,*E,F,N,P,Q,R
Lamkin, Stu	WB5IGG - A,M
Mattis, Allen	N5AFV - E,F,N,O
Messick, Roger	KA5NTY - A,D,*
Meyer, Rick	KA5YSL - S
Miles, Bud	W5DYN - F
Miles, Stephen	KB5DVY - F
Morrison, Henry	W5RIY - M,O
Nance, Herb	N5GZW - D,E,F
Overacker, Larry	KB5AKS - E
Parker, Harold	ND5F - A,E,J,M,O,P,Q
Peterson, Vance	N5FLQ - F,R
Pollard, Randy	AK5G - O
Ricketts, Robert	N5JKD - (next line)
C,D,*E,F,G,I,J,L,N,O,P,Q,R,S	
Ross, Joe	AA5BD - A,B,C,D,*E,F
Rumsey, Johnny	WD5GQD - C
Scism, Mike	WV5M - E,F

Operating from ships power, the latest Mackey marine transmitter had been recertified a few months earlier. An emergency unit could be operated from a standby gasoline generator or batteries. Finally, the crystal receiver as part of the Mackey system.

The MORRO CASTLE, built at Newport News, Virginia in 1930 cost \$5,500,000.00, could move at 21 knots and had appointments that made her the de-lux ship of the New York-Havana run.

At this point Ed interrupted and said, "A ship can sail without a captain, it can put to sea without an engineer, but it cannot move without a radio operator aboard." The MORRO CASTLE as a passenger ship was required to have three radio operators.

While in port, a ship cannot transmit but often a radio watch is maintained. Before sailing from Havana, the radio room watch received a weather report the seas would be running high with possibly a serious storm developing.

Normal radio watch continued with a steady flow of commercial traffic as the MORRO CASTLE steamed toward New York and into the storm area.

Captain Robert Wilmott, 31 years service and Commodore of the Ward Line fleet, reminded everyone a year before the ship had been "lost" to the company for two days off Cape Hatteras with just a few wet blankets. The budding storm was still far to the north.

The night before arriving in New York called for a gala farewell party. The party was cancelled after Captain Wilmott was found dead in his cabin.

"Say, this has the makings of a real mystery-thriller," said Will.

First officer William Warms became captain of a MORRO CASTLE now heading into a hurricane with winds of unpredictable force.

A few minutes before 2:45 A.M., September 8, 1934, night watchman Arthur J. Pender saw what he at first thought was steam, but found it was smoke and started to trace the source. Smoke was coming from a ventilator on the hurricane deck. He started for the hold but found a fire in the writing room and another fire across the corridor in the library. Steward Campbell joined with night watchman Pender and Harold Foersch in using the nearest fire extinguishers to control the fire. It was reported to the bridge, "Smoke coming from the ventilator on the port side near number one stack." This was an air intake.

Warms ran to the officers' quarters shouting for acting First Officer Freeman and Acting Third Officer Hansen. Before either could obey his orders, another watchman, Dunn, relayed the fire was spreading and demanded immediate fire control.

Within four minutes of the fire first being reported, from the bridge Captain Warms could see smoke coming from the open portholes on the sun deck. The sun deck formed a railed passageway two decks deep around the grand ballroom and lounge mezzanine. He now ordered the entire crew to fire stations.

The ballrooms, in the center of the ship, was ablaze and flames were in the corridors aft and spreading with the course into the wind. The radio room was not yet above the fire area.

Warms had a twenty-seven panel Darby fire extinguishing system. It did not show fire in any of the passenger areas. Fire had not descended to the engine room but smoke was beginning to come in at this lower level.

Suddenly, within one minute, the entire board lit showing the fire had spread from the top to the bottom of the ship and was out of control; the flames seen from the LUCKENBACH and Coast Guard shore stations through the storm.

At 2:56 A.M., less than fifteen minutes after the first report, Warms activated the fire alarm. At the same time the MORRO CASTLE'S short and long blast on the whistle meant to "stand by boats."

Second Radio Operator George Alagna was asleep at 2:56 A.M. Third Operator Charles Maki was on duty, but there was no traffic and he was routinely monitoring a news transmission for the ships daily newspaper. With the ship moving into the wind, the smoke and heat had not reached the radio room.

The fire alarm brought Alagna up and out of bed. He woke George W. Rogers, Chief Radio Operator, and headed for the radio room. Rogers had arrived a few moments afterward and told Alagna to go to the bridge to learn if they should send a distress signal. Dense smoke was in the passageway but Alagna made it to the bridge without difficulty.

There was still power to the main transmitter, but the small bulb that burns as long as there is power went out. A new bulb did not show power. Rogers switched everything to the emergency frequency of 500 KHz, and the antenna was connected to the secondary transmitter. With the loss of main power, the gasoline powered emergency generator started.

(continued next month)

Honor Roll for 1987 as of Dec. 87

by Ray Dillard, W5F

Legend:

- A. Houston Tennesseco Marathon
- B. Azalea Run
- C. Bayou City Fun Run

Annual Club Property Inventory and Audit

By Suzanne King, KB5BAY

I have appointed Frank DeArmas, KB5EQG, as the auditor for calendar year 1987. This appointment was ratified by all board members present at the January board meeting.

Part of Frank's duties will include locating and identifying all BVARC club property.

If you have any club property in your possession, PLEASE give Frank a call and tell him what you have. Frank can be reached at the following numbers: (H) 879-1536 or (W) 561-2962

Minutes from the January MERA board meeting

by Robert Ricketts, N5JKD

These are the pertinent minutes from MERA's January 5th meeting.

Steve Yates, KA5DUU, vice president of MERA resigned from office due to a move to Ft. Worth. Robert Ricketts, N5JKD, was selected as the new vice president. Steve was also the technical committee chairman and trustee of the repeater. Robert was selected for these positions as well.

It was decided that ALL MERA board members will share the responsibility of acting as control operators.

Also discussed was the intermod problem on the repeater. There are still several things we have in mind that may help the problem. I'll keep you informed of the progress.

Minutes from the January BVARC board meeting.

by: Robert Ricketts, N5JKD

The following are minutes from the January board meeting.

Dave Dyer, KA5UXP, was nominated for the office of president of BVARC (vacated by Steve Yates, KA5DUU). The nomination carried and Dave is now our new president.

Jack Van Demark, WN5A, was nominated for the office of second year director of BVARC (vacated by Robert Ricketts, N5JKD). The nomination carried and Jack is now our new second year director.

Congratulations to both Dave and Jack!

Frank DeArmas was appointed to serve as auditor for calendar year 1987.

Jerry Borg was appointed as net control director. (Being net control director can be a pain! Please "just say yes" if Jerry asks you to call the net. - ed.)

Submitting Articles for News Letter

by Robert Ricketts, N5JKD

Most of the items published in our monthly newsletter come from you, our club members. Because of this, it's important to help supply articles for publication or the newsletter will be pretty shallow.

You are encouraged to contribute anything that you feel would be of interest to our club. Don't feel that what you have to say is unimportant. If you have something you want to say, then please do say it!

There are several ways to submit articles for publication. You can mail the article directly to me at the address listed below. You can give the article to me at any meeting. Or, if you have a computer (any model) and a modem, you can call my BBS (Bulletin Board System) and upload the article as a text file.

My mailing address is:

Robert K. Ricketts, N5JKD
6218 Meadway
Houston, TX 77072

If you wish to upload an article to my BBS then please call my modem number, (713)933-0111, and set your communications program to eight data bits, one stop bit, and no parity. 300/1200/2400 BPS is supported. Several file transfer protocols are available as well as ASCII.

If you have never called my BBS before, then please follow the newuser procedure. You'll see what to do once you call in.

The publication deadline is the third Thursday of each month. Please have the article in my hands by that time.

Thanks in advance for your help!

Stories From Our Members....

The following story was written and submitted by Henry Morrison, W5RIY. This story will be run in serial form over a period of several months. Thanks to Henry for this creative work!

SOS de MORRO CASTLE (2nd of 5)

A quick note on the 145.47 MHz repeater. The new repeater was installed on December 18, 1987. This new repeater was made possible by the many generous contributions made by a great number of people. I urge everyone to feel free to use the repeater. The repeater has been working very well except for an occasional problem with intermodulation when the 145.45 MHz repeater is very active. Also there has been a little bit of a problem with a squirrel(s). On many occasions the culprit has sounded like a youngster. Parents might keep this in mind if they have radios tuned to the repeater. The problem was first noticed the day after the repeater was installed. If your QSO is interrupted by a squirrel, your best defense is to ignore his existence. (In other words, don't throw nuts! - ed.)

Well so long for now and I wish the club good luck in 1988.

73 de KA5DUU

Our new West Side Social meeting

For ya'll who may be unaware, BVARC now has a purely social gathering each month at the Bear Creek Park Community Center each fourth Thursday of the month. Bill Kemp, KG5CB, has been instrumental in planning this new "West Side Social" as it's called and for it's success. The Bear Creek Park officials are also excited about having a HAM club as part of the activities at the center.

We're even talking about installing a club station at the center for use by members and to introduce new comers to the hobby and for emergency communications training and service!

Meeting at Bear Creek may be just the thing for those folks who live a long way from Missouri City.

Renewing your B-VARC Membership

Now is the time to renew your membership with the BVARC! It's been a fun year and this year will be no exception.

Please renew now and your membership (including the newsletter) will be uninterrupted.

The dues for 1988 is \$12.00 for an individual membership and \$2.00 for each additional family member.

The club has really been involved in public service events during the 1987 year. Our specialty is helping out with the various fun runs held through the year. Just look at the honor roll and see how active the club has been!

Also, remember when the club meetings were held in the Missouri City Fire Hall? Well, we've reserved use of the fire hall for BOTH the BVARC board meetings (first Thursday) AND the general membership meeting (second Thursday) for the entire 1988 calendar year! It's the opinion of many club members that the fire hall was always more fun - felt more like a real HAM club meeting.

I became the BVARC Bulletin editor about four months ago and plan to stay with the job for a good while. Each month the news letter gets more interesting. I'm even working on having full color photos included in some issues.

Won't you please renew or join again if membership has lapsed? Things are really getting interesting these days.

Results of the December 8th Exams

by Harold Parker, ND5F

B-VARC again sponsored the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examinations that were held on Tuesday, December 8, 1987 at the Strake Jesuit School in Houston.

The V.E. Team:

Henry Morrison, W5RIY
Jack Van DeMark, WN5A
Ray Dillard, W5SF
Stu Lamkin, WB5IGG
Harold Parker, ND5F

A total of thirty-five (35) exams were administered during the evening to sixteen (16) applicants. Of those, we have two (2) new Novices and eight (8) upgraded their license with a total of fifteen elements passed. The overall pass rate for the evening was forty-three (43) percent.

Congratulations to all the following who qualified for a new license, upgraded or passed exams.

Roger Berry, KB5DFR - General
Zack Blailock - Novice
Fred Creel, KB5EQF - Technician
Andrew Getz - Technician
Gerald Gibson - Novice
Leeroy Lance, KB5EST - Technician
Charles McBride, KB5ESS - Technician
Charles Prochaska, KB5EQJ - Technician
Bill Rimmer, Jr., KB5ESC - Technician
Lori Simonton, KB5DWC - General
Bill Hickox, K5BDZ - Element 1C

Thanks to everyone for all the great help, especially to Vincent, WA5ETS, for making this great site available for the Tuesday night exams each month.

B-VARC Officers and Directors

President	Steve Yates, KA5DUU
Vice President	Suzanne King, K5BAY
Secretary	Robert Ricketts, NSJKD
Treasurer	Frank DeArmas, KB5EQG
Past President	George Jolly, NDSE
1-year Director	Clint Gilliland, N5FNA (to be appointed)
2-year Director	Carl Albrecht, KA5QLQ
3-year Director	

Committee Structure for 1988

ARRL and Public Liason ARRL Affiliation * Subscriptions * Public Liason	Stu Lamkin, WBSIGG
Emergency Communication ARES Emergency Coordinator Fl. Bend County RACES Liason	Edgar Harwell, W5WVX Jerry Caudill, N4IVI
Finance	Gerald Borg, N5APW
Hamfest	David Dyer, KA5UXP
Membership Services Name Tags B-VARC Roster Database	Carl Albrecht, KA5QLQ Robert K. Ricketts, NSJKD
Operating Events Field Day B-VARC Net Scheduling	Steve Yates, KA5DUU
Programs	Mike Eason, N5KRU
Public Service	Johnny Ray Dillard, W5SF
Publications B-VARC Bulletin * Membership Packets	Robert K. Ricketts, NSJKD
Training	Joe A. Ross, AA5BD
Volunteer Examination Program	Harold Parker, ND5F Stu Lamkin, WBSIGG Johnny Ray Dillard, W5SF
Youth Outreach	Stu Lamkin, WBSIGG Kathy Jolly, KA5WHK

Past Presidents

Jerry Albright, WDSHQJ	1978
Wade Eilers, WNSTEN	1979
Bob Spradling, WSUBD	1980
Richard Shankle, NSKV	1981
Dick Bigelow, WDSCTO	1982
Steve Gottlieb, W5SOEN	1983
Ron Bolyard, KASGYG	1984
Harold Parker, ND5F	1985
Steve Schuster, W5SG	1986
George Jolly, NDSE	1987

Order of the Key

Bob Spradling, WSUBD	1980
Stu Lamkin, WBSIGG	1981
Ron Bolyard, KASGYG	1982
Wade Eilers, WNSTEN	1983
Steve Gottlieb, W5SOEN	1983
Allen Hanus, KASRXX	1984
Harold Parker, ND5F	1984
Dick Hagerman, WBSRN	1985
Vance Patterson, N5FLQ	1985
Ray Dillard, W5SF	1986

Silent Keys

John Amarin, NSISW	Bill Campbell, N5EUL
Joe Noles, NSBOK	Bill Ossenfort, NGSC
Bob Spradling, WSUBD	Robert Weber, KASSLO
Bill Alexander, K5DRG	

This mailing of this issue was postponed due to several late breaking news items of importance.

Our President Says

by Steve Yates, KA5DUU

Our President Says

I am very happy and proud to have been elected President of BVARC for the year of 1988. At the time of the elections I had no idea that I would be offered a job in the days after that I could not refuse. This would normally be good news, but unfortunately, the position requires moving to Fort Worth. My first day at General Dynamics is January 11, 1988. Needless to say, I will have to resign from presidency soon after my term begins. I apologize for any inconveniences I may have caused the club.

A new 1988 president will be chosen by the 1988 board of directors. The board will be open for suggestions for possible candidates. I'm sure they will choose at the January 7th board meeting and I feel confident that whoever they choose will do a very good job. I give congratulations to the new president.

There are a few things I would like to see materialize in 1988. I hope our club will work very hard to get a club station setup at the Bear Creek Park Community Center. This will enable members who are not able to have efficient stations to gain the experience and knowledge one gets through assembling and operating such a station. A club station will bring the club closer together and bring in many new hams and members. What better way to get an individual interested in amateur radio than to demonstrate it in action. The station will be a great help for public service, especially in times of an emergency.

I would also like to see our club get a little more technically involved. The club station is a start. Maybe we can organize club construction projects such as QRP transmitters, receivers, accessories and such. I believe this will make the club more interesting and enable people to have hands on experience.

I will remain a member of BVARC, of course, and will offer any help I can. I will keep in touch in whatever way I can. Please look for me on 3960 KHz during the BVARC rag chew net. Maybe I can even make contact through the repeaters when I get my VHF/UHF system back up like before. Also, please feel free to contact me if you would like to make special skeds for propagation or equipment tests.

For the many years I've been a BVARC member I have always enjoyed it and have looked forward to seeing ya'll at the meetings. Laura and I are going to really miss all of you. We have relatives and many friends in the Houston area so you probably won't be seeing the last of us.