



B-VARC BULLETIN

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

Editor in Chief: Vincent Orlando, WA5ETS 774-7651 (0800-2100 hrs)

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 Fort Bend and Southwest Harris 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 each year conducts classes leading to amateur radio licenses, and each month sponsors a volunteer-examiner team that offers examinations in all levels of HAM licenses.

To obtain information about the club and its various activities, please call the Houston Amateur Radio Helpline (713) 488-4HAM (488-4426). For information about joining the club, contact Randy Pollard, AK5G, at (713) 667-5123.

Volume: 16 Issue: 4

April 1993

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

From: Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
P. O. Box 1630
Missouri City, Texas 77459



B-VARC MEETING SCHEDULE

Thurs, Apr. 8 **General Membership Meeting**
7:30 pm **Sugar Land Community Center**
Program: *Project Beacon* by
Allen Mattis, N5AFV

Thurs, May 6 **Board Meeting**
7:30 pm **Sugar Land Community Center**

Larry Levy WD5DRB
8901 Braesmont - #250
Houston, TX 77096

April 1993

B-VARC Calendar of Events

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4 7:30pm South Texas ARES Net 3.873	5 7:00pm Novice & Tech Class at Strake Jesuit 7:30pm 34-94 Swap Net 146.94 8:00pm ARES 147.30 8:00pm Ft. Bend County RACES Net 145.49 9:00pm B-VARC Net 145. 47 & linked repeaters	6 8:00pm 10 X Shot 28.488 10:00pm AMSAT 147.10	7 8:00pm B-VARC Rag-Chew 3.960 (Busy? +3 Khz)	1 6:30pm RACES AMTOR Net 7.080 7:30pm Board Meeting: Sugar Land Community Center	2 Texas Special Olympics	3 7:30am B-VARC Breakfast 9:00am Hou Emergency Mgmt Net 146.84 (9:30 on 3.905) 8:30pm C.W. 147.32
11 1:30pm Texas State RACES Net 7.248 7:30pm South Texas ARES Net 3.873	12 7:00pm Novice & Tech Class at Strake Jesuit 7:30pm 34-94 Swap Net 146.94 8:00pm ARES 147.30 8:00pm Ft. Bend County RACES Net 145.49 9:00pm B-VARC Net 145. 47 & linked repeaters	13 7:00pm Amateur Exams (Strake Jesuit College Prep) 8:00pm 10 X Shot 28.488 10:00pm AMSAT 147.10	14 8:00pm B-VARC Rag-Chew 3.960 (Busy? +3 Khz)	15	16	17 7:30am B-VARC Breakfast 8:00am Sidewalk Sale 9:00am Hou Emergency Mgmt Net 146.84 (9:30 on 3.905) 8:30pm C.W. 147.32 MS-150 Bike Tour
18 7:30pm South Texas ARES Net 3.873 MS-150 Bike Tour	19 7:00pm Novice & Tech Class at Strake Jesuit 7:30pm 34-94 Swap Net 146.94 8:00pm ARES 147.30 8:00pm Ft. Bend County RACES Net 145.49 9:00pm B-VARC Net 145. 47 & linked repeaters	20 8:00pm 10 X Shot 28.488 10:00pm AMSAT 147.10	21 8:00pm B-VARC Rag-Chew 3.960 (Busy? +3 Khz)	22	23	24 7:30am B-VARC Breakfast 9:00am Hou Emergency Mgmt Net 146.84 (9:30 on 3.905) 8:30pm C.W. 147.32
25 1:30pm Texas State RACES Net 7.248 7:30pm South Texas ARES Net 3.873	26 7:00pm Novice & Tech Class at Strake Jesuit 7:30pm 34-94 Swap Net 146.94 8:00pm ARES 147.30 8:00pm Ft. Bend County RACES Net 145.49 9:00pm B-VARC Net 145. 47 & linked repeaters	27 8:00pm 10 X Shot 28.488 10:00pm AMSAT 147.10	28 8:00pm B-VARC Rag-Chew 3.960 (Busy? +3 Khz)	29	30	

Notes from the President . . .

by Betty Wicox, KAØTEN

Spring is here, and we are all ready to get out of the house and do fun things. Fortunately for us, it's not that hard to find these opportunities. April brings all kinds of activities. Let's start with our own B-VARC meeting with Allen Mattis, N5AFV, giving the presentation on Project Beacon. We all know of Allen's interest in this study and feel sure that this is going to be a very interesting meeting. Shortly after that on April 17th, ARSC (Amateur Radio Serving Children) will be participating in the Ronald McDonald House Spring Fling. All hams are encouraged to stop by and work a little HF radio and demonstrate their skills to the public. Also this day is the MS-150 race and Steve, WA5OEN, and Sandra's wedding day.

April 29th will find NASA tending to business with another space shuttle launch (if all goes well). For those hams interested, listen to the astronauts live on 146.64.

June 4-6 is Ham Com 93 in Arlington, Texas. Several hams car-pooled last year and had a great time. Mattress Tom, K5CNU, has been good enough to contact the Kerrville Bus Company about a chartered bus for people interested in going that way. The cost round trip for a full bus of 47 people will be \$35.00 each. Now if this sounds like a good idea, someone interested in chairing this committee needs to let me know ASAP. Time slips away quickly. Job responsibility is to make sure the bus is full.

Also, there is one other little consideration: hotel/motel reservations near the Ham Com 93 facility. Individuals riding the bus will be responsible for making their own hotel/motel arrangements or another person is needed to step forward to do this work for the group. Any takers?

Last but not least, several B-VARC hams met last Saturday at the Seabrook Sailing Club for the Echo/B-VARC spaghetti dinner. That was nice. DX was pouring in on the 10-meter rig with a dipole antenna right on the water's edge. People who know tell me that signals reflect well off salt water.

Speaking of the water's edge, several people are interested in another fishing trip, with or without an HF radio.

Let's all get out and enjoy.

B-VARC RAG CHEW CHECK-INS 3.960 MHz 8:00 pm Wednesdays Compiled by Melvin Thatcher, KB5ION

February 3, 1993

KB5ION NCS, W5EFB, K15SC, KE5SR, WN5A, N5AFV, N5CPA, W5GHK, KG5KV, WD5DRB, WA5OEN, N5UOG

February 10, 1993

KB5ION NCS, KG5KV, W5EFB, N5AFV, K15SC, KB5LFU, N5CPA, W5GHK, KB5USL, N5OAC, WA5OEN, WA5ETS, WN5A, K15CE, KB5PLA, K15FO, KE5SR, KAØTEN, WD5DRB

February 17, 1993

KB5ION NCS, W5EFB, KG5KV, WA5OEN, N5AFV, KE5SR, K15SC, WB5SRN, N5KXU, N5UOG, K5ZRC, W5GHK, N5ECP, KB5TIB, N5YKR, WD5DRB, N5CPA, KD4EUQ

February 24, 1993

KE5SR NCS, WD5DRB, W5EFB, K15SC, W5GHK, N5AFV, W5IHY, WA5OEN, N5CPA, WD5SRN, KB5TIB, KG5KV, WA5ETS, N5UOG

March 3, 1993

W5IHY NCS, W5EFB, KE5SR, W5GHK, WA5OEN, KB5USL, WD5DRB, N5AFV, KB5TIB, KB5PAJ, K15FC, N5CPA, N5KXU

March 10, 1993

W5IHY NCS, KB5IL, W5EFB, W5GHK, K15FC, N5AFV, KB5USL, N5OAC, N5YKR, KB5TIB, KG5KV, WA5OEN, WD5DRB, N5CPA, N5KXU, WD4NNL

March 17, 1993

KE5SR NCS, KB5ION, K15SC, W5GHK, N5AFV, W5IHY, N5CPA, W5GLD, N5KXU, KB5TIB, KB5LFU, N5OAC, KG5KV, N5UOG

March 24, 1993

KB5ION NCS, W5IHY, K15CE, W5GHK, W5EFB, KB5TIB, KB5USL, KG5KV, N5OAC, N5WMB, K15SC, KB5LFU, N5AFV, WA5PWL, KB5TMY, WD5DRB

The World of 1Ø—1Ø International

by Al Mattis, N5AFV

All logs for the 1993 Winter QSO Party have been submitted, and the S.H.O.T. chapter estimates that thirty-five logs were credited to the chapter. This is an increase from twenty-nine chapter logs in the last QSO Party. Thanks to many B-VARC members for helping out in this effort. All that's left now is to wait for the scoring chapter to process the logs and announce the QSO Party results.

The S.H.O.T. chapter has three new members. T.J. Layton, KB5TIB, Criag Culver, KB5USL, and Marion Chambers, KB5PAJ, recently joined the chapter. The chapter extends a hearty welcome to T.J., Larry, and Marion, and we hope our membership continues to grow.

Ten-Ten paper chasers have been very active on 28.345 mhz. There has been some Latin American QRM on recent days, but it seldom lasts for more than fifteen to twenty minutes. Ten-Ten chapters with specials for paper chasers this month include River City (CA), Branding Iron (TX) and Columbine YL (CO). The new Speedway chapter (OR) continues to be popular.

In general, propagation on ten meters has been good, with occasional episodes of poor propagation. The poor conditions usually last about a day or so. Last year the band dropped out in late April, and rather poor summer propagation conditions existed for four to five months. Hopefully, good propagation conditions will last at least another month this year, and summer conditions will also be better. To give you an idea of current band conditions, I operate mobile for about thirty minutes during my lunch break each weekday from the upper level of my parking garage in downtown Houston. My equipment consists of a twenty-five watt Radio Shack HTX-100, and a converted magnet mount CB antenna. During the last two weeks, I have worked stations in OR, CA, RI, WA, TX, AZ, MN, PA, NV, MT, MA, ME, CT, NJ, SASK, and ONT. The band has been open every day but one during the past two weeks.

Remember, the Houston S.H.O.T. net meets every Tuesday evening at 8:00 local on 28.488 mhz. All amateurs are welcome to check in, even if they do not have a 10-10 number. If you are not a member of 10-10 International and wish to join the organization, please check in to the net. There are a lot of exciting activities in 10-10, and many friendly people can be found on the 10-meter band.

73 de N5AFV

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Results of the March Amateur Exams

by Harold Parker, ND5F

B-VARC again sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examinations that were held on Tuesday evening, March 9, 1993, at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory in Houston.

The V.E. Team

Ron Grimes, WA5SCE
Harold Parker, ND5F
Don Schexnailder, AB5IV

Assistants

Carl Albrecht, AA5JW
Craig Culver, KB5USL
Cass Germany, KG5IT
Michael Lay, N5PTN
Larry Levy, WD5DRB

A total of twenty-three exams were administered during the evening to eleven applicants. Six unlicensed candidates received their new licenses: two technician licenses and four "codeless" techs. One other upgraded with a total of fourteen elements passed. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was sixty-one percent.

Congratulations to all the following who upgraded and/or passed exams:

Richard Beverlin — Technician
Norman Butler, KB5NXV — Element 3B
Milton Dobsy — Technician
Edward Firasek — Technician
Guy Guillet — Technician
Mark Heidorn, KA5EZZ — Advanced
William Misiaszek — Technician
Timothy Sledge — Technician

Many thanks to all the Team Members and Assistants who volunteer their valuable time and effort each month.

All of us at B-VARC again thank Vincent, WA5ETS, and everyone at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory for making these excellent classroom facilities available to us for our exams each month.

73's ... ND5F

**B-VARC Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes, March 4, 1993**
by Bud King, N5UOG

A quorum of the B-VARC Board of Directors met at the Sugar Land Community Center on March 4, 1993. This was the third meeting of the Board for the 1993 calendar year. The meeting was called to order by the President, Betty Wilcox, KAØTEN, at 7:30 pm.

The minutes of the February 4th meeting were submitted by Bud King, N5UOG, and approved unanimously.

The Club Treasurer, Sam Wilson, N5CPA, reported a balance of \$4,309.93 in the treasury as of February 28, 1993. The Treasurer's report was approved unanimously.

The Club President confirmed the March 11 meeting would be presented by the Houston Amateur Television Society.

The Board participated in a lengthy discussion concerning the dates and subject matter of the programs as listed below:

- April 8 "Project Beacon, Long Wave Frequency Research" presented by Allen Mattis, N5AFV
- May 13 "PC Computers" presented by Vincent Orlando, WA5ETS
- June 10 "RF Dangers of ELF Radiation" presented by Al Zermeno, KK5W, and "Legal Aspects of Such Transmissions" by Carl Hacker, KB5LDY.

Vice President, Doug Holley, KE5SR, stated that he would conduct the C.W. practice sessions on March 15 and 29th. The frequency will be 146.51 simplex. He noted that May 1 has been selected as the date for the second annual Camp Out. (Editor's note: The camp out has since been postponed until the fall, and the C.W. practice has been cancelled due to lack of interest.)

Vincent Orlando, WA5ETS, reported that 166 members have paid their dues, as of March 4, 1993. He also stated that he would make up new rosters and have them for the March 11 regular meeting.

Claudia Kozinetz, N5VCZ, submitted a report for the B-VARC Public Service Events Committee. At her request, the Board officially sanctioned the K-9 Fun Run to be held Sunday, March 14. Approximately fourteen B-VARC members have volunteered to work the event. The following was included in Claudia's report:

Glenn Edwards, WB5LZG, and Ralph Cheek, KB5DNT, continue to recruit volunteers for the MS-150 Bike Ride scheduled for April 17-18.

On Wednesday, February 10th, Carl Hacker, KB5LDY, & Claudia Kozinetz, N5VCZ, attended the first organizational meeting for the ALA Clean Air Bike Ride. That event will take place on Sunday, May 2nd. Plans for the race and radio support are going well.

A special events class will be scheduled for Monday, May 17th. The content and format will be similar to the class given last September 21, 1992. This class is aimed to educate radio operators on the components of a special event and the role of a radio operator.

Allen Mattis, N5AFV, reported that the B-VARC Rag Chew Net had approximately 21 check-in's to the net. The average number that check in regularly is twelve.

Michael Ricco, N5YKR, Net Control Operator for the Monday night net stated that he would circulate a printed questionnaire which would give him feed back from the listeners of the net as to their evaluation of the new format he has recently used.

The President informed the Board of the need for amateur radio operators to man the equipment at the Ronald McDonald House. Amateur Radio Serving Children (ARSC) can be contacted by calling Jim Clarke, N5FIX, at 468-6050 or talk to Charlie Prochaska, KG5KV. The Board suggested that the President have Jim Clarke present the problem to the membership at the March 4th general meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

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Project Beacon: A Scientific Investigation Conducted by Amateur Radio Operators

by Allen Mattis, N5AFV

Project Beacon, a study of the possible effects of active faulting on radio propagation in the LF and MF nondirectional beacon (NDB) band (200-500 khz), is underway in the Houston metropolitan area. The project was begun in February, 1993, and is expected to last for approximately one year. The project will look for changes in the propagation of signals from selected NDB's that can be correlated to movement on nearby active faults.

Even though the Houston metropolitan area does not have earthquakes, active faulting is present. The problem of subsidence in the Houston area has been well documented, and portions of the city have subsided approximately ten feet. The subsidence occurs in conjunction with active faulting. Movement on the faults is episodic, with some faults having no movement for years, followed by movement of inches in a few months. The subsidence has been related to the pumping of ground water from wells in an aquifer underling the city. The use of well

April B-VARC meeting
to have unusual program

Project Beacon — What is it?

Are there active faults in Houston?

What is N5AFV up to now??

water is being phased out in favor of surface water in an effort to bring the subsidence under control. Project Beacon will have an opportunity to examine the possible effects of active faulting on the propagation of signals from selected NDB's before the use of well water is totally phased out.

Project Beacon will look for a number of possible effects on NDB signal propagation. The propagation effects are of three basic types. Monitors will look for: 1) primary signals consisting of odd rumblings and hissing sounds, or high background noise levels; 2) sudden enhancement of signals or sudden drops in signal strength; and 3) perceived shifts in the received frequency of beacons. Current research

suggests that piezoelectric effects and/or movement of saline ground water along active faults could cause such propagation changes.

A number of NDB's in the Houston metropolitan area are located near active faults. Based on location, beacon frequency, and history of fault movement, four beacons have been selected for monitoring in Project Beacon. All four NDB's are located less than two miles from active faults. In addition, all the selected beacons run twenty-five watts of power.

The project is designed so that interested amateur radio operators can provide the monitoring. The general coverage receiver that is built into almost all current amateur radio HF transceivers will cover the band of interest. Several converters are commercially available to allow reception of the long wave band on 75 meters for use on older amateur radio equipment without general coverage receivers. Anyone interested in participating in Project Beacon should contact me as soon as possible. To learn more about the project, please attend the B-VARC general membership meeting on April 8, 1993, where the meeting program will consist of a detailed presentation of Project Beacon.

Public Service Update

by Claudia Kozinetz, N5VCZ

Our second public service event of this year started on a cold and early (29° & 4:30 am) Sunday morning, March 14, at Sam Houston Park in downtown Houston. The K-9 Fun Run benefiting the Houston Humane Society was a triple event including a 2-mile competitive run, a 2-mile run/walk and a 1-mile run/walk. There were dogs of all sizes and shapes running and walking along with their owners, stopping every now and then to lap up some water from the kiddie pools strategically placed along the course. Veterinarians were stationed at each quarter mile and dog bones and bagels (whatever your liking) were available for the finishers.

Eleven B-VARC members volunteered to provide radio support for this event. There were assigned to positions such as shadowing event officials, riding with law-enforcement officers and supply vehicles, monitoring water/first aid stations, monitoring for safety at the start and finish lines, and providing a net-control station. Since it was a short course, a

two-meter simplex frequency and HT radios worked well between the downtown buildings. These operations were checked a week in advance of the race by stationing one ham with an HT radio at the net control station site while a second ham with another HT radio rode the course and communicated, at quarter mile intervals on the course and at other locations within Sam Houston Park, with the first ham.

So, why participate in public service events? These events provide hams with opportunities for: 1) making the community aware of what hams are and how hams can help by providing radio support events, i.e., promoting amateur radio operation; 2) practicing communications via amateur radios and improving one's skill in participating in a communications net (once a ham gains skill in working with the public in sometimes hectic and near-emergency conditions during a public service event, that person is fairly well prepared and experienced enough to provide communications for the more difficult natural disaster events); and 3) providing for the safety and benefit of the attendees and participants of the event.

The following events are opportunities for you to become involved in public service through B-VARC. Please call the contacts of the following events and volunteer your time and skills.

Event	Date	# Hams Needed	Contact
Texas Special Olympics	April 2-3	12-14/day	Esther Stiver, KB5URT 777-1971
MS-150 Bike Tour	April 17-18	35-40	Glenn Edwards, WB4LZG 498-7425
ALA Clean Air Bike Ride	May 2	20-25	Carl Hacker, KB5LDY 792-4359

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May Bulletin Deadline

Articles and other material destined to be printed in the May issue of the B-VARC *Bulletin* should be submitted by no later than April 29th. Please send the material to Vincent Orlando, WA5ETS; 8900 Bellaire Boulevard; Houston, TX 77036-4699 or FAX (713) 774-6427.

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Lou Kronberg
Chairman of the Board
W5IHY

Field Day 1993

by Al Zermeno, KK5W

It's that time again. Field Day's probably the most important event in ham radio. This is the event in which we test our readiness to respond to any communication needs under emergency conditions.

As you know, we live in an age of high technology. With the proliferation of mobile phones, personal pagers, automobile theft beacons, remote control devices, etc., all competing for portions of the electro-magnetic spectrum, ham radio is continually threatened with the loss of the bands of frequencies we now enjoy. Our strongest argument for holding on to these bands is the public service communications we render in times of disaster. The performance of ham radio in these instances is now legendary. The big question now is how ready are we? This is what Field Day is all about.

For the newly licensed hams, Field Day is a world-wide event in which we retreat to the outdoors setting up our stations in parks, campsites, etc. and compete for the most contacts in a twenty-four hour period using emergency power generators. Of course, you can operate from your home under normal conditions; however, you get more points for each contact made under emergency power conditions and the number of stations in operation. This makes for a perfect club activity. Historically, B-VARC has participated in Field Day as a club for many years. So, this year will be no different.

Field Day will be held on June 26-27 starting at 1300 local Saturday and winding up at 1300 Sunday afternoon. The location will be the same as last year, shelter #3 at Bear Creek Park off Hwy 6 north of I-10 west. Reservations have already been made. Normally, the park is closed at night; however, due to our good behavior in the past, park authorities have again given us permission to operate with all-night access to the facility. Since this is a county park, it is needless to say that alcohol consumption is prohibited during the event. It doesn't do one's code speed any good anyway.

In an effort to make this more of a family activity, we plan to have a few new activities. Just as last year, there will be a catered meal Saturday afternoon, barbecue probably. Details will follow. We'd also like your ideas on a Sunday brunch. The brunch doesn't have to be catered. I would think a committee could easily handle eggs, coffee, etc. Maybe just breakfast tacos! In addition, I'm recommending

that B-VARC furnish awards for the winners of certain activities such as volleyball, horse shoes, and anything else you might like. Teams might be formed such as the "no codes" vs. "coded techs". Maybe we can get a QCWA team to take 'em all on! Oxygen bottles will be furnished.

As you can see, ham radio will be the primary function; however, there's no reason we can't make it a fun weekend for the entire family. If you have ideas and would like to chair one of these activities, please call me and volunteer. These things just don't happen without some commitment.

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