



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.

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November 1993

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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



***Your Membership Expires Next Month !
Please renew with enclosed application form***




B-VARC MEETING SCHEDULE

Thurs, Nov. 11	7:30 pm	General Membership Meeting Sugar Land Community Center Program: <i>Election of New 1994 Officers and Chili Feast</i>
Thurs, Dec. 2	7:30 pm	Board Meeting Sugar Land Community Center

Allen Mattis N5AFV
5314 Wigton
Houston, TX 77096

November 1993

B-VARC Calendar of Events

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
7 7:30pm South Texas ARES Net 3.873	1 7:30pm 34-94 Swap Net 146.94 8:00pm Ft. Bend County Emergency Net 145.49 9:00pm B-VARC Net 145.47 & linked repeaters	2 8:00pm 10-10 SHOT NET 28.488 10:00pm AMSAT 147.10	3 8:00pm B-VARC Rag-Chew 3.960 (Busy? +3 Khz)	4 6:30pm RACES AMTOR Net 7.080 7:30pm Board Meeting: Sugar Land Community Center	5	6 7:30am B-VARC Breakfast 9:00am Hou Emergency Mgmt Net 146.84 (9:30 on 3.905)
8 7:30pm 34-94 Swap Net 146.94 8:00pm Ft. Bend County Emergency Net 145.49 9:00pm B-VARC Net 145.47 & linked repeaters	9 7:00pm Amateur Exams (Strake Jesuit College Prep) 8:00pm 10-10 SHOT NET 28.488 10:00pm AMSAT 147.10	10 8:00pm B-VARC Rag-Chew 3.960 (Busy? +3 Khz)	11  Elections & Chili! 7:30pm General Meeting: Sugar Land Community Center	12	13 7:30am B-VARC Breakfast 9:00am Hou Emergency Mgmt Net 146.84 (9:30 on 3.905)	20 7:30am B-VARC Breakfast 8:00am Sidewalk Sale 9:00am Hou Emergency Mgmt Net 146.84 (9:30 on 3.905)
14 2:00pm Texas State RACES Net 7.248 7:30pm South Texas ARES Net 3.873	15 7:30pm 34-94 Swap Net 146.94 8:00pm Ft. Bend County Emergency Net 145.49 9:00pm B-VARC Net 145.47 & linked repeaters	16 8:00pm 10-10 SHOT NET 28.488 10:00pm AMSAT 147.10	17 8:00pm B-VARC Rag-Chew 3.960 (Busy? +3 Khz)	18	19	27 7:30am B-VARC Breakfast 9:00am Hou Emergency Mgmt Net 146.84 (9:30 on 3.905)
21  25 K Warm Up Run 7:30pm South Texas ARES Net 3.873	22 7:30pm 34-94 Swap Net 146.94 8:00pm Ft. Bend County Emergency Net 145.49 9:00pm B-VARC Net 145.47 & linked repeaters	23 8:00pm 10-10 SHOT NET 28.488 10:00pm AMSAT 147.10	24 8:00pm B-VARC Rag-Chew 3.960 (Busy? +3 Khz)	25  Thanksgiving	26	
28 1:30pm Texas State RACES Net 7.248 7:30pm South Texas ARES Net 3.873	29 7:30pm 34-94 Swap Net 146.94 8:00pm Ft. Bend County Emergency Net 145.49 9:00pm B-VARC Net 145.47 & linked repeaters	30 8:00pm 10-10 SHOT NET 28.488 10:00pm AMSAT 147.10				

Notes from the President . . .

by Betty Wilcox, KAØTEN

This month *QST* published the results of Field Day operations. First in the South Texas class and sixth in the nation was the Texas DX Society. Second in South Texas and eighth in the nation was NARS, and eighth in South Texas in the 2A category was B-VARC with 2,186 confirmed points. Congratulations to all three on a job well done.

Also, congratulations are in order for Bruce Paige, KB5ZRV, on his two contacts with the space shuttle in less than twenty-four hours. Bruce has responded to the elementary school's request for help in setting up a program for school children to talk to future satellite astronauts. This may be a long time in happening, but I for one appreciate his efforts.

Houston Ham Com is almost here. November 12-14th at the Adam's Mark Hotel is this year's time and new location. Parking was a real problem in the past. This facility should provide more and better parking areas. The traditional Friday night auction has been cancelled for this year. Harold Parker, D5F, and those people who help him will be administering the VE testing again this year.

November's meeting is the meeting where we nominate and elect new officers for the club. Our nominating committee makes sure that at least one person is in the running for each vacant office position. In addition, nominations from the floor are wanted and encouraged. If you plan to nominate a B-VARC member for an office, please check with that person to be sure that s/he would like to be considered for the position and will have the time to meet the needs of the office.

With a club the size of ours, there is no shortage of talent. We cannot always use all that is available. Please do not feel that by nominating another candidate you are being disloyal to anyone that the nominating committee is proposing. This only confirms that we have many members capable of doing the job.

Our November meeting is also our chili cook-off. James Summral is a new B-VARC member and has stepped forward to chair this event. He will need your help/chili. Seriously, it takes about ten to twelve people bringing chili and others bringing rice, cornbread, Fritos, cheese, onions, salsa, sodas,

B-VARC RAG CHEW CHECK-INS

3.960 MHz 8:00 pm Wednesdays

Compiled by Melvin Thatcher, KB5ION

October 6, 1993

N5CPA NCS, KB5ION, KE5SR, W5IHY,
N5AFV, KI5SC, N5OAC, W5GHK, W5GLD,
N5YKR, KK5W, KAØTEN, KB5LFU, N5KXU

October 13, 1993

W5GHK NCS, KI5SC, N5OAC, AB5OK,
W5IHY, WA5OEN, N5AFV, KK5W, WAØTEN,
N5VXU, KG5KV, N5KXU, KB5ION

October 20, 1993

No net — due to bad weather.

October 27, 1993

KB5ION NCS, KE5SR, KG5KV, W5IHY,
N5OAC, N5CPA, N5AFV, KI5SC

crackers, bowls, etc. to feed our group. Call Jim at 541-3420 and ask what you can bring.

I am pleased to report that I have received several nominations for the three awards that B-VARC gives out at its awards banquet in January. I must receive these nominations in writing by the date of the December meeting (Dec. 9th) for them to be considered. Don't miss this time to honor someone you know.

The location for the January Awards Banquet has not yet been chosen. So far, the prices are looking like \$20.00 per person. I am still looking for a location that will be nice, reasonable, and will give us a choice of something other than chicken.

Let's remember that Michael Ricco, N5YKR, is requesting to be replaced in January as net control operator for the Monday night B-VARC net. This is your chance to practice your net control skills. No amount of training can equal on-the-job experience when in a real life crisis.

Also, Vincent Orlando, WA5ETS, will no longer be publishing our *Bulletin* for 1994. His long-term service and dedication needs to be recognized and acknowledged. Vincent has been doing a job that probably will take at least two people to do, so grab a buddy and make a commitment. If you have a

computer which will run WordPerfect, you may be the one we need. Other word processors or desk-top publishing programs could be used but would not be quite as convenient. If we don't have someone step forward soon, we may not have a *Bulletin* to begin the new year. S.O.S.

73 de Betty

Results of October Amateur Exams

by Harold Parker, ND5F

B-VARC again sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examinations that were held on Tuesday evening, October 12, 1993, at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory in Houston.

The V.E. Team

Craig Culver, AB5OK
Harold Parker, ND5F
Mike Strong, KT5H

Assistants

Carl Albrecht, AA5JW
Cass Germany, KG5IT
Don Schexnailder, AB5IV

A total of twenty-seven exams were administered during the evening to fourteen applicants. Five unlicensed candidates received their new licenses: two Technicians and three "codeless" Technicians. Three others upgraded with a total of twenty elements passed. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was seventy-four percent.

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

Michael Hartman — Element 2
Pete Norris, KD4IWB — Advanced
Billy Phillips — Element 2
Michael Powney — Technician
Christina Risinger, KC5BZA — Element 3B
Ronny Risinger — Technician
Rex Ritz — Technician
Richard Snitkin, N5VTV — Advanced
James Sumrall — Element 2
David Wagner, Pending — Technician
Robert Wittner — Technician
James Wynn, Pending — Element 3B
Ryan Wynn — 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, WA5ETC, and everyone at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory for making these excellent classroom facilities available to us for our exams each month.

73's ... ND5F

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Excitement on the Medium Wave Band

by Allen Mattis, N5AFV

The little known range of frequencies between the AM broadcast band and the 160-meter amateur band (1615-1800 khz) provides some interesting listening. Most amateur radio operators who use the 160-meter band have the necessary equipment to tune this frequency range. My current interest in this band stems from a telephone call I received one evening a few weeks ago.

Mark Burkart, KB5GVK, called me from New Orleans because he knew of Project Beacon and the other LF activities I was involved in. Mark needed help, and because we are both members of the Longwave Club of America, he decided to give me a call. Mark is a member of a growing group of experimenters known as Medfers (MEDIum Frequency Experiment-ERS). These experimenters operate a number of beacons in the 1620-1700 khz range. FCC rules limit the beacons to 100 mw output. Mark had just set up a beacon on 1642.7 khz and wanted to know if it could be heard in Houston. After our telephone conversation, I tuned to 1642.7 khz and listened for KA83, the CW identifier used by Mark's beacon. I could hear a CW signal down in the noise, but it took almost 15 minutes of listening before I was able to make a positive ID. Mark's beacon had been heard in Houston!

The excitement of that evening had piqued my interest in the medium frequency experimenter's band. I spent the next couple of evenings exploring what the band had to offer. I was not able to log any other Medfers, but I did log a few other signals of interest.

Approximately fifty navigation beacons operate in the band. Most of the beacons are located in South America. I was able to log beacon MER located in Mercaderes, Colombia, on 1685 khz. MER, as well as a number of other beacons, transmits with a power of 1,000 watts and is relatively easy to copy.

Another group of signals heard on the band comes from driftnet buoys used by fishermen. These marker buoys transmit signals ranging up to six watts in power. The CW identifiers used consist of alphanumeric groups of four to seven characters. The strongest driftnet buoy signal that I copied was 9W233 on 1653 khz. Numerous buoy signals have been heard along the east and west coasts as well as along the Gulf of Mexico. Some of the buoys

have reportedly been heard in the lower portion of the 160-meter amateur radio band above 1800 khz. Current plans by the FCC to extend the AM broadcast band up to 1705 khz will almost certainly increase pressure on the users of the medium wave band, and other violations of FCC frequency assignments may be expected.

B-VARC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, October 7, 1993

by Bud King, N5UOG

A quorum of the B-VARC Board of Directors met at the Sugar Land Community Center on October 7, 1993. This was the tenth meeting of the Board of Directors for the 1993 calendar year.

President Betty Wilcox, KAØTEN, opened the meeting at 7:30 P.M.

The minutes of the September 2nd meeting were submitted by Bud King, N5UOG, and approved unanimously.

Club Treasurer, Sam Wilson, N5CPA, reported a balance of \$3,482.80 in the treasury as of September 30, 1993. The Treasurer's report was approved unanimously.

Vice President Doug Holley, KE5SR, reported that the club picnic was attended by 76 persons. The "Code Class" conducted by Doug for those interested in upgrading has had an attendance rate of 7 to 21 people.

Mel Thatcher, KB5ION, stated that the Wednesday Nite Rag Chew Net was holding it's own insofar as check-in's are concerned. Al Zermeno, KK5W, suggested that persons without HF privileges be put on the air by phonepatch. The suggestion was approved by the Board members.

Bill Dessens, N5KXU, reported on the availability of various types of banners. A discussion concerning prices, format, etc. followed without action taken by the Board. A firm proposal will be presented to the Board a later date.

Glenn Edwards, WB4LZG, confirmed the date of November 1st as the beginning of the novice and no-code technician classes. The classes will continue for six weeks.

The Board approved the use of the B-VARC VE team to administer the amateur examinations at the Houston Ham Comm. Harold Parker, ND5F, is the

