

the B-VARC BULLETIN

The Monthly Publication of The Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

Volume 19 Issue 1

January 1996



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(713) 494-3741

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Claude Sessions—K5HFY
(713) 242-6069

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Ron Grimes—WA5SCE

I trust everyone has enjoyed the holiday season. Things should be settling down by now, and hopefully you are all refreshed and ready to get a start on the new year. Looking back on 1995, B-VARC has had a great year thanks to the hard work of a number of folks. A special thanks goes to 1995 President, Carl Cunert, for giving of his time and energy to lead the club this past year. We missed having you around the last few months though, Carl. As a matter of fact, on the repeater, I haven't heard reference to doughnuts in weeks.

In January, we have an opportunity to provide special recognition for those who have helped B-VARC not only in the last year, but, in some cases, for several years. Our annual Awards Banquet is coming up on Thursday, January 11. At that time, we will recognize the special service of individuals and organizations that have helped B-VARC during 1995. In particular, we will announce the recipients of three special awards: Order of the Key, Loop and Zepp and Dr. Bill. The honorees to receive these awards are, in my humble opinion, quite deserving of special recognition. Their service to the club and to amateur radio has been exemplary, and from which all of us could learn. The recipients of these 1995 awards are...well, come to the banquet and join in congratulating and thanking them!

For next year, I still need volunteers to fill several key positions. At this time, we desperately need a program chairman for 1996. This is an extremely important job, and one which will have a major bearing on the club's success in the coming year. If you are interested in this job or helping the club in other ways, please give me a call at the number listed in the bulletin. I hope to see you at the banquet.

73, Ron—WA5SCE

FROM THE EDITOR

by Jackie Burton—KC5OHJ

Beginning with this month's issue, we will have a column entitled "Profiles" which will be devoted to our members. The purpose of this column will be to get to know some of our long-time members/experienced radio operators, and to hopefully give encouragement to new members/hams.

I would like for all of the long-time members of B-VARC and long-time amateur radio operators (and you know who you are) to begin putting together a short synopsis of your experience in ham radio, using the following guidelines:

When, why and how you got into ham radio; calls held; areas of interest (e.g. DX, packet, ATV, etc.); equipment used; ARRL service and awards won; and any other personal information you wish to include such as your occupation, spouse/partner name and call (if any), military service, etc.

The original idea for this column came from Irv—KK5QQ, although it has been suggested by several of our members.

As you complete your profile, please send it to me and I will publish one per issue. Don't make me have to beg!

The Editor

SPECIAL THANKS

All of us at B-VARC would like to extend our gratitude to the management at KHTV, Channel 39, for the use of their equipment and facilities in order for this bulletin to be published.

We would also like to thank Claude Sessions—K5HFY, and all the other B-VARC members who volunteer their services in helping to put the bulletin together. It couldn't be done without you.

B-VARC BOARD MEETING*by Louis House—KD5GM*

A quorum of the Board of Directors met at the Sugar Land Community Center on December 7, 1995. This was the twelfth meeting of the calendar year. The meeting was called to order by President, Ron Grimes-WA5SCE, at 7:30 p.m.

The following Board members and guests were in attendance: Ron Grimes—WA5SCE, Louis House—KD5GM, Donn Washburn—N5XWB, Billy Jones—KC5EVD, Angel Jones—KC5KRV, Victor Richard—N5NAS, Claude Sessions—K5HFY, Bud King—N5UOG, Jackie Burton—KC5OHJ, Mike Hardwick—N5VCX, Sam Wilson—N5CPA, Mel Thatcher—KB5ION, Terry McCoy—KK5RL, Pete Norris—KJ5SS and Jim Cahann—KB5TBZ.

Recording Secretary, Louis House—KD5GM, presented the November minutes and after these amendments: The first word in paragraph nine to read ("Special") and in paragraph ten add the word ("steak") to the list of entrees. The minutes were approved with a motion that passed unanimously.

Treasurer, Donn Washburn—N5XWB, presented the Treasurer's report dated December 7, 1995, showing a balance of \$3,660.13 in the bank. There was a question concerning the B-VARC membership application, showing the incorrect amount for the ARRL dues, which is currently \$31.00. It was suggested that all B-VARC forms should show a dated form number at the bottom of the page to indicate that the form is a current one. The Treasurer's report was accepted with a motion that passed unanimously.

Corresponding Secretary, Billy Jones—KC5EVD, presented the selected wording which will appear on the award that will be presented to Channel 39, KHTV at the B-VARC annual banquet on January 11, 1995. A motion and second to accept the wording passed unanimously. Billy further stated that he was working with Harold Parker—ND5F, who was having the plaque made. The Board thanked Billy for doing a fine job.

President Ron Grimes—WA5SCE, inquired about a box of Club records. Louis House—KD5GM reported that he had the records in his possession and would turn them over to President Grimes after the meeting.

Claude Sessions—K5HFY reported that he had received enough Ten Ten numbers for B-VARC/KC5OIG to have its own Ten Ten number. President, Ron

Grimes—WA5SCE thanked Claude for his successful effort.

Bud King—N5UOG reminded the Board that the December 14, 1995 general meeting will be held in the "Wedgewood North" room. Bud King—N5UOG reported that he received a letter from the City of Sugar Land, Parks and Recreation Department, stating that on January 2, 1996 at 8:00 a.m. the City of Sugar Land will begin accepting applications for the use of the Sugar Land Community Center for the six month period from January to June of 1997. Bud asked the Board's pleasure in his applying for meeting space for this time period. A motion was made for Bud to please make reservations for the meeting rooms for the period of January through June of 1997. President, Ron Grimes—WA5SCE thanked Bud for his help in this matter.

Bud King—N5UOG reported that the City of Sugar Land has requested help from B-VARC in the City's annual Christmas Food Drive. Bud stated that he volunteered to serve in the Food Drive in the name of B-VARC. This will fulfill B-VARC's annual obligation to Community service to the City of Sugar Land for the use of City facilities. President, Ron Grimes—WA5SCE gave a heartfelt thanks to Bud King—N5UOG for volunteering to do Community service in B-VARC's name.

Victor Richard—N5NAS stated that this was his last meeting as Three Year Director and that it was a pleasure to serve B-VARC in this office. President, Ron Grimes—WA5SCE thanked Victor for serving the office well and that he would be missed.

Jackie Burton—KC5OHJ wished to remind contributing editors that the 15th of each month is the deadline for articles to the B-VARC Bulletin.

B-VARC Rag Chew Net Manager, Sam Wilson—N5CPA, reported that the net is doing well. The Net had a low of 12 and a high of 21 check-ins for the month of November. Sam also reported the more distant stations checking in are Doug—KE5SR, Carl—WB8SVR, IM—N5OAC and Michael—KE5SC.

President, Ron Grimes—WA5SCE presented changes to the by-laws that had been previously tabled. The changes read as follows:

Revise Article I Section A.2 to read as follows:

Payment of the annual dues as specified in ARTICLE VI of these By-Laws.

Revise Article VI Section A.3 to read as follows:

Individual lifetime membership dues shall be determined to be a multiple of the annual dues as specified in ARTICLE VI, Section A, Paragraph 1 of these By-Laws. The value of the multiplier shall be ten (10), unless otherwise set by the Board of Directors; however, the multiplier shall not be set at a value less than ten (10).

Revise Article VI Section B to read as follows:

Dues payable by a renewing member joining the club shall not be prorated.

Revise Article VI Section C to read as follows:

Annual membership dues are to be paid in advance on a one-year basis, and are renewable one calendar year from the date of such payment. Dues payment shall renew membership for one calendar year from the date dues payment is received, or one year from the expiration date of the previous year's dues, whichever is later. Non-payment of annual dues by the renewal date shall result in termination of membership.

A motion was made and second to accept these amendments as written and passed unanimously.

Donn Washburn—N5XWB reported that the Club had not changed banks as of this date, citing that it would be better for the new Treasurer, Pete Norris—KJ5SS, to undertake this task since he will be dealing with the account in 1996.

Louis House—KD5GM reported that he had not been contacted by Lester Welch, of the Tatanka District Boy Scouts, concerning organizational meeting and Mr. Welch's request for B-VARC to have a manned radio station at the West Oaks Mall on March 9, 1996. Louis further stated that he had contacted Steve Gottlieb—WA5OEN who volunteered to help organize B-VARC's participation in the event.

Mike Hardwick—N5VCX presented to the Board copies of "PUBLIC SERVICE EVENT GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERS OF THE BRAZOS VALLEY

AMATEUR RADIO CLUB." Mike suggested that these proposed guidelines be looked over and discussed and passed on to the new Board for review, and hopefully these guidelines may be adopted by the Club to help set a standard of good practices during special events communications sponsored by B-VARC. The Board reviewed the list of Do's and Don'ts and after some discussion, a motion was made to table any action until the next Board meeting. Mike Hardwick—N5VCX also presented the list of Special Events for the year 1996. The list showed all events and contact persons that B-VARC sponsors as well as the ones that are sponsored by other clubs in the area. There was some discussion about types of recognition for those persons who serve in special events in the name of B-VARC. President, Ron Grimes—WA5SCE asked the board for any recommendation for Special Events Coordinator for B-VARC. President Grimes thanked Mike Hardwick—N5VCX for doing a very fine job for the last several years.

A motion was made for Jackie Burton—KC5OHJ to be that B-VARC Public Service Net Manager. Followed by a second, the motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Louis House—KD5GM brought to the board's attention that the ARRL Net Directory listings for B-VARC are outdated and asked the Board's pleasure in registering the club's nets with the current information about the Net Manager call signs, dates and times of operation. After some discussion about the possibility of using the Club's call—KC5OIG, it was recommended that this task be tabled until more information about using the Club's call could be obtained.

President, Ron Grimes—WA5SCE adjourned the meeting, at 8:47 p.m. with a motion, second and a unanimous vote.



PROPOSED REVISIONS TO B-VARC BY-LAWS

by Ron Grimes—WA5SCE

At the December 7, 1995 Board of Directors Meeting, the following By-Law changes were discussed and approved by the Board. In accordance with Article IX—Amendments of the By-Laws, it is required that 1) the proposed changes must be submitted in writing to the Club President at least 30 days prior to a membership meeting, 2) the proposed amendments must be included in a meeting notice mailed to members, and 3) the changes must receive a 2/3 affirmative vote at a membership meeting. Item 1) has been met and, by publishing the proposed changes in this newsletter, the notification requirement of Item 2) is fulfilled. Because our January meeting is a banquet, we will vote on the proposed changes at the regular meeting in February.

The proposed changes address the following two issues:

Changing from the existing January 1-December 31 dues structure with prorated quarterly amounts to a structure that allows membership renewal to be based on the point in time you pay your dues.

Revises the wording regarding life membership, and establishes the life membership multiplier at 10. As a point of information, the life membership multiplier can be set by the Board without an amendment to the By-Laws.

Please review the proposed changes. If you have any questions or suggestions, please call Ron Grimes at 341-7137.

1. Revise Article I Section A.2 to read as follows:

Payment of the annual dues as specified in ARTICLE VI of these By-Laws.

2. Revise Article VI Section A.3 to read as follows:

Individual lifetime membership dues shall be determined to be a multiple of the annual dues as specified in ARTICLE VI, Section A, Paragraph 1 of these By-Laws. The value of the multiplier shall be ten (10), unless otherwise set by the Board of Directors; however, the multiplier shall not be set at a value less than ten (10).

3. Revise Article VI Section B to read as follows:

Dues payable by a renewing member or a new member joining the club shall not be prorated.

4. Revise Article VI Section C to read as follows:

Annual membership dues are to be paid in advance on a one-year basis, and are renewable one calendar year from the date of such payment. Dues payment shall renew membership for one calendar year from the date dues payment is received, or one year from the expiration date of the previous year's dues, whichever is later. Non-payment of annual dues by the renewal date shall result in termination of membership.

Ron Grimes—WA5SCE

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Donn Washburn—N5XWB

As of December 16, 1995, the current membership for the club is:

224

For 1996, the membership total to-date is 64, which includes 3 life memberships.

OUT OF THIS WORLD HAM RADIO ACTIVITY

by Bruce Paige—KK5DO

Segment: The AMSAT QSL Bureau

Have you ever wondered what to do when you have made a contact with a station and are ready to send off that QSL card? Should you send it via U.S. mail, direct overseas, or the AMSAT QSL Bureau? Yes, just like the HF side of amateur radio, the satellite side has their own QSL bureau, which is run by Walt Rader—WA3DMF in Maryland. Unlike the ARRL bureau, the AMSAT QSL bureau is a two-way street. You can send all your cards through them for both stateside and overseas, and they handle incoming and outgoing QSL's.

If you would like to use the bureau to receive your QSL's, send three to six #10

SASE's with one unit of postage on each. Print your call sign in the upper left-hand corner. DX stations include enough IRC's for each envelope. I will give you the address in a minute where to send them. To send your QSL cards through the bureau, arrange the cards alphabetically by call sign. Stateside cards are free. All cards outside the U.S. postal districts are 10 cents each.

If you change your call sign, keep the bureau informed. They will also mark each envelope you send them so you will know how many envelopes are left. All mailings are at the end of the month. If you want your envelope sent to you only when there are so many cards in the envelope, immediately below your call sign in the upper left corner, indicate how many cards you desire before mailing to you. Also, when you get a call sign upgrade, you will have to keep envelopes with both call signs on file at the bureau in case some late cards come in with the old call.

That's easy as can be—a free service that can save you lots of money in stamps. If you do not send an envelope for your QSL cards that they have, they will be destroyed after 6 months. What a shame—work so hard for a DX contact and then not spend the 29¢ to get the cards.

Don't let that happen to you. Keep some envelopes on file at the AMSAT QSL Bureau. Send your envelopes and QSL cards to AMSAT QSL Bureau c/o Walt Rader—WA3DMF, 3702 Allison Street, Brentwood, Maryland 20722.

It is so simple to QSL, please do so. Everyone enjoys getting those cards. It is frustrating when someone doesn't send one after promising to do so. If you don't have any QSL cards because you are a new ham or you are getting ready to move and don't want to spend money on a card that will be outdated soon, do the next best thing. A QSL card doesn't have to be a card. In fact, I have received several that were on 8-1/2 x 11 pieces of paper that included a description of what the ham does for a living and describes the homebrew equipment he made. It was really slick and quite a change from the regular card. All you have to remember to do is include the time, date, mode, call sign and RST of the station you worked, along with your call sign and a signature. Drop it in the mail and you will make someone quite happy. In fact, this way you never need to print QSL cards and each will be unique. Another ham in Arkansas uses a greeting card program

and a color dot matrix printer, making his QSL card like a birthday card, printing on the front, inside two pages and the back. Looks real pretty with the home-drawn art work. I have also received a photograph with the information on the back. Several hams go to the local 5 and dime (which is now the \$5 and \$10) and get postcards. They then have a rubber stamp that they plaster the back with and fill in the blanks for the QSO information.

Here is a note on mail in Japan. The postage has gone up. It now costs 110¥ to mail 10 grams to the states. A greenstamp is only worth 100¥. But, an IRC is good for 130¥. Now is the time to send IRC's instead of green stamps. Keep this in mind when QSL'ing with Japan. Be original, and have fun doing it but don't neglect your QSL'ing.

THE INTERNET

by Jackie Burton—KC5OHJ

The following article is the fourth in a series of articles John Moore—KK5NU, has written for publication in the B-VARC Bulletin.

Also, please remember that Billy Jones—KC5EVD, is in the process of adding e-mail addresses to the roster. If you have an e-mail address, please relay that information to him via e-mail at his Internet address, bjones@aramco.com, for inclusion in the next printing of the roster.

The Editor

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All You Want to Know About the Internet and More

by John W. Moore—KK5NU

Where Do I Find It? (continued)

Today, much of America has access to a personal computer, either at home or at the workplace. The vast majority of the computers sold today contain some provision to connect using a modem through the public, switched telephone network. Terminology is one of the keys to technology today, and the computer world speaks its own version. To navigate with knowledge, you must know the language.

A modern personal computer consists of several individual components, each with a specific purpose, and all tied into the

system. Probably the best way to get started is with the input—using the keyboard with the familiar QWERTY typewriter keyboard layout that we all should be familiar with. From the input area—the keyboard, one usually views in real time, or at the time of actually typing the data, exactly what you type on the monitor or terminal screen. Every keystroke is replicated on screen such that those entered in error or out of sequence may be changed prior to finally saving the work to disk or file storage area. With the proper program applications involved, simultaneous transfer of the data is enabled over the telephone lines to a remote location, or, with the proper interface, over the airways without the necessity of a direct hard-wired connection to complete the link. The CPU (or Central Processing Unit), with all of its allied equipment, power supplies, memory area and file storage areas, is the controlling point and the brains of the operation. Most computers today are also set up to have a printing device of some sort to enable the production of a hard copy of all the information to be saved in readable form. Without getting into a deep, technical treatise on electronic data, it is safe to say that all of the information is kept and maintained in a series of binary codes, each consisting of a single state that is either on or off, represented by a voltage or lack thereof, looking like a 0 or a 1 in each slot to be found. While not readable to the human eye the string 00011011 has a definite meaning to the little electronic processor. Since the information is digital in nature, to transmit it over the telephone lines some form of conversion to analog information must be done. This is the function of the MoDem, short for Modulator/Demodulator. For broadcast over a radio link, the device used is the Terminal Node Controller, or TNC.

More to come...

John Moore—KK5NU

VE EXAM RESULTS NOVEMBER 1995

by Harold Parker—ND5F

B-VARC again sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examinations that were held on Tuesday evening, December 12, 1995 at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory in Houston.

The VE Team consisted of:

Carl Albrecht -	AA5JW
Harold Parker -	ND5F
Don Schexnaider -	AB5IV

The Assistants were:

Cass Germany -	KG5IT
Irene Gordon -	N5AYX

A total of 19 exams were administered during the evening to 11 applicants. Two (2) unlicensed candidates received their new "codeless" Technician licenses. Two (2) others upgraded with a total of 12 elements passed. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was 63%.

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

Jack Featherstone—KC5RIY - Element 4A
David Fick - Element 2
Margret Himes - Technician
Scott Jackson - Technician
Steve Massie—KC5RGL - General
Eric Moeller—KC5FOG - Element 3B
Martha Vigeant - Element 2
Thomas Weldon—KK5VE - Extra
Jon Wilson - Element 2

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—W5ETS, and everyone at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory for making these excellent classroom facilities available to us for our exams each month.

73, Harold Parker—ND5F

THE WORLD OF TEN TEN INTERNATIONAL

by Al Mattis—N5AFV

Ten Ten International recently announced the appointment of two new awards managers. Bob Pescha—K7QXG, of Aloha, OR, is the new 100 to 900 band awards manager. Bill Montgomery—KB3GW, of Las Cruces, NM, is the new Worked All Prefix (WAP) award manager. Both

appointments are effective January 1, 1996. It was also announced by Ten Ten International that applications are being taken for the position of Worked All Countries (WAC) award manager. Alan Sherman, K1AS, who has been manager since the award was instituted in 1982, has announced that he wishes to relinquish the position.

The November special upgrade program conducted by the Houston S.H.O.T. (Space Houston On Ten) chapter was a success. Many stations took the opportunity to upgrade their point value by participating in the special program. Upgrade applications continue to be received.

The ARRL 10m contest was held December 9-10, 1995. The effort made by the Houston ECHO Society to participate as a club appeared to turn out a larger number of local participants. The band opened briefly Saturday morning, and participants who caught the opening enjoyed some good propagation. I was able to work one African station, and many Latin American and Caribbean stations. Domestically, the opening allowed Houston stations to work much of the upper Midwest. Those participating in the contest appeared to enjoy themselves.

Paper chasers continue to be active on 28.345MHz when the band is open. Chapters with specials this month include Eagle Watch (AL), Kansas Trails (MN), Ocean State (RI), Peach State (TX), and Speedway (OR). With the poor propagation, many of the weekly nets held by each Ten Ten chapter only have local stations check in. Nonetheless, papers chasers continue to enjoy working on upgrades in the various active Ten Ten chapters.

Propagation on the 10m band has settled down into what appears to be the sunspot low. There continue to be domestic band openings, but they are usually of short duration and characterized by strong QSB. DX can be worked at times, particularly Latin American stations. Remember, even during the low in a sunspot cycle, 10m will still have band openings, so check the band occasionally and you may be pleasantly surprised.

Remember, the Houston S.H.O.T. net meets every Tuesday evening at 8 p.m. local time on 28.488MHz. All amateurs are welcome to check in, even if they do not have a Ten Ten number. If you are not a member of Ten Ten International and wish to join the organization, please

check into the net. There are a lot of exciting activities in Ten Ten, and many friendly people can be found on the 10m band.

B-VARC RAG CHEW NET CHECK-INS

by Sam Wilson—N5CPA

The B-VARC Rag Chew Net is held on Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m. on 3.960MHz, +/- 3kHz. The following check-ins were reported for the month of November:

November 1, 1995

N5CPA (NCS), W5EFB, WA5SCE, KB5ION, N5UOG, W5GLD, KJ5SS, WD5CJL, WA5DIG, J5AFV, WN5A, KK5RL

November 8, 1995

N5CPA (NCS), KB5VTB, KB5TBZ, KB5ION, N5UOG, K5HFY, W5IHY, KK5RL, WD5CJL, N5MCK, WA5DIG, WN5A, KC5HJ, KF5NU, WA5TWL, KK5W, N5ECP, WD5DRB, KK5JJ

November 15, 1995

N5CPA (NCS), N5UOG, KK5RL, KG5KV, W5IHY, WD5CVK, KK5W, KJ5SS, WD5CJL, WN5A, KC5HJ, WB8SVR, KK5DO, KB5ION, WA5TWL, WB5VYR

November 22, 1995

KG5KV (NCS), AB5OK, N5AFV, N5CPA, KK5IS, WA1KMA, KJ5SS, KK5RL, KK5UO, W5GLD, WN5A, KD5GM, W5IHY

November 29, 1995

N5CPA (NCS), N5UOG, K5HFY, N5AFV, KB5ION, W5IHY, KK5DO, KC5HJ, N5OAC, KK5RL, WA5CYI, KF4AAC, WB8SVR, WA5TWL, KG5KV, W5GHK, WD5CJL, KK5IS, KG5PP, KF5NU, WN5A

ARRL DISCUSSES POSSIBLE LOW FREQUENCY HAM BAND

by Al Mattis—N5AFV

Those hoping for a new low frequency (LF) ham band near 160kHz were pleased to learn that the ARRL executive committee recently discussed the possibility of such a band. Richard Wilder—K3DI, a frequency management consultant, was retained by the League to search for suitable LF spectrum for a new ham band.

The current scientific interest in a possible relationship between active faulting and low frequency radio signals has helped to draw attention to the LF band. Project Beacon, a 1993-4 LF monitoring project that a number of Houston area amateur radio operators participated in, is used as an example of such a relationship. The Project Beacon monitors documented what appears to be a relationship between disturbances in LF propagation, and changes in the rate of fault-controlled subsidence in the Houston metropolitan area. The work of the Project Beacon participants is also supporting efforts for a new LF ham band. It is believed that a higher level of activity and experimentation on low frequencies by radio operators would provide more information about possible relationships between fault activity and LF propagation.

For years, license free operation has been permitted in the 160 to 190kHz range, with a power limitation of one watt and an antenna length of 50 feet. The experimenters who have been operating on this band have become known as LowFers. The LowFers have mixed opinions about the possibility of their frequencies becoming a ham band. It appears that LowFers could stay on the band with a shared allocation. The LowFers would like the influx of new operators and the resulting increase in new LF radio equipment that would be offered by manufacturers if a new LF ham band were created. However, it is likely that the hams would be prohibited from working the LowFers because amateur radio regulations prohibit hams from working unlicensed stations. Because the proposed band is below 30MHz, it is likely that an amateur radio license with CW privileges would be required to operate on the band. Other nations have already given amateur radio operators LF privileges. Papua New Guinea, Great Britain and New Zealand have instituted LF ham bands or are in the process of doing so.

The frequency management consultant retained by the League, Richard Wilder, was a LowFer himself in the late 1940s when he operated on 197kHz in New York. The Longwave Club of America (LWCA), which promotes LowFer activity, has urged its members to provide Wilder with any information that they feel will be useful to him as he researches LF frequency availability.

Last year, the ARRL expressed concern about an LF band interfering with power line carrier (PLC) systems. PLC systems

are low frequency carrier current systems used by electrical utility companies to provide communications important to the reliability and security of electric service. PLCs are a closed circuit, non-radiating system, similar to cable television in that they use the power lines to carry a signal. These systems operate on frequencies below 490kHz, and are subject to Part 15 of the FCC rules. The League is reportedly pursuing discussions with power companies regarding possible interference with PLCs that might result from an LF ham band. It appears that it is only a matter of time until an official request is made to the FCC to allocate a low frequency amateur radio band in the United States.

UPCOMING SWAPFESTS . . .

Victoria Swapfest 1996

Date: March 9, 1996
 Sponsor: Victoria Amateur Radio Club
 Place: Knights of Columbus Hall
 3610 N. Ben Wilson
 Victoria, Texas
 General admission: \$5.00.
 Talk-in: 145.190- /145.130- (PL 103.5)
 For further information and table presale, contact:
 Victoria Amateur Radio Club
 121 South Main Street
 Suite 205
 Victoria, TX 77901
 (512) 573-0821.

ANTENNA COLUMN

by Rick Hiller—KF5NU

[Watch for Rick's exciting antenna column in the next issue. In the meantime, Rick has provided us with a fill-in article, which follows.]

LINEAR AMPLIFIER TIDBITS

by Rick Hiller—KF5NU

Tube Burn-In

Transmitting tubes generally require a "burn-in" time to increase emission to its nominal value. In broadcast stations, 100-200 hours at rated filament voltage is allowed for burn-in. This initial operation allows the getters, materials which absorb and hold residual gas, to finish the vacuum of the tube in its final operating environment. In amateur radio amplifiers,

tubes will often require 50 to 200 hours of "key down" transmit time to remove the residual gas and condition the filament for full emission. It is well advised to allow tubes to operate in standby mode (filaments on, no transmit) for 10 hours before initial tune-up occurs. This information is reprinted with permission from the catalog of the RF Parts Company, suppliers of amateur radio power tubes and transistors.

SCANNER JACK'S CORNER

by Jack Roberts—KB5TMY

Here are some frequencies (for SWL radios and scanners) for our U.S. military in case of war.

SWL Frequencies:

6761 SAC
 8964 SAC
 8968 SAC
 8992 TAC
 11.175 Global command
 11.176 Global command
 11.244 SAC
 11.267 Navy Seals
 13.200 Novou
 15.016 MAC
 18.027 MAC

Scanner Frequencies in AM Mode:

MAC: 130.65, 141.80, 297.0, 319.4, 372.8 and 390.9
 SAC: 311.0, 321.0, 342.2
 TAC: 381.3, 140.40, 292.1, 280.5, 283.7, 305.6, 305.7, 306.6, 343.0, 349.4, 376.2, 382.5
 (Primary frequencies are underlined.)

RFI, EMI AND OTHER STUFF: Fine Tuning

by Pete Norris—KJ5SS

Although the RFI produced by the DC motor was not entirely eliminated, the effects were substantially reduced. Not being happy with anything short of perfection, some additional "fixes" were installed.

Beads made of material 43 were installed in series with the material 77 beads. No noticeable improvement was realized, supporting past experience that results of initial efforts are often dramatic, while later efforts are frustrated by marginal or no detectable improvement.

Additional capacitors of various values less than 0.01µF were placed in parallel

with the 0.01's, again without noticeable improvement. Oh well, such is the art!

What could be done to further reduce the RFI? A common "fix" is to try shielding: A common approach involves spray painting the inside of the case with a conductive paint specifically designed for this purpose. A wire screen would then be installed over both the air intake and exhaust ports. Care would be taken in power lead penetrations of the case to avoid RF leakage. These somewhat drastic measures are suggested as it is suspected the motor is directly radiating the lower level signals now detected. The visible arcs from the brushes previously mentioned also imply RF leakage. Furthermore, a well-controlled test environment with detection equipment better suited for the purpose, would be desirable, if not necessary. All of which was sufficient to support the decision not to pursue the effort further!

The final step was to physically restrain the added components to prevent solder joint failure during the anticipated handling and transportation of the chest. This being accomplished, the traveler was bid a pleasant and safe journey.

Encouraging news from the halfway (4,500 miles) point: The chest was operating properly, often 24 hours a day, with no "hash" noise.

Upon return, after 9,000 miles, the traveler confirmed the chest operated the entire trip without failure and with EMI suppression satisfactorily accomplished. The project was therefore considered a success!

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY NETS

- Monday**
- 7:30 p.m. 34.94 Swap Net
146.94MHz
- 3:00 p.m. Ft. Bend Cty EM Net
145.49MHz
- 3:30 p.m. B-VARC Code Practice Net
146.47MHz (receive only)
- 9:00 p.m. B-VARC
145.47MHz
- Tuesday**
- 8:00 p.m. Ten Ten SHOT Net
28.488MHz
- 10:00 p.m. AMSAT Net
147.10MHz
- Wednesday**
- 8:00 p.m. B-VARC Rag Chew
3.960MHz (+/- 3kHz)
- 8:30 p.m. B-VARC Code Practice Net
146.47MHz (receive only)

- Friday**
- 8:30 p.m. B-VARC Code Practice Net
146.47MHz (receive only)
- Saturday**
- 9:00 a.m. Houston Emer. Mgmt. Net
146.84MHz (Sky
Warm/RACES)
- Sunday**
- 7:30 p.m. ARES Net
147.30MHz
- 2nd & 4th Sundays**
- 1:30 p.m. TX State RACES Net
7.248MHz

B-VARC CODE PRACTICE NET

by Louis House—KD5GM

The Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club sponsors a Morse Code Practice Net, called BCN, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights at 8:30 p.m. The purpose of this net is to offer a consistent code practice schedule for all amateurs who are working on their upgrades. The text is sent at approximately 5, 8, 10, 13 and 20 wpm. The signal type is MCW on the 2m frequency and CW on the 10m frequency. The source of the text is announced in CW before the text is sent. The length of the net is usually 25 to 30 minutes. Check-ins are welcomed at the start of the net (on 10m, check-ins are taken from 8:15 to 8:30 p.m.). Tune in on 146.47MHz simplex or on 28.146.47MHz CW, with a desire to increase your code proficiency and have a good time.

The net roster for the month of November lists a total of 15 stations checking in. These are: KSHFY, NSUOG, KK5RL, KC5HNI, KC5KGG, KC5EUS, KC5MBV, KB5WZI, KC5EUX, KB5WZE, WD5DRB, KC5JRL, KB5LDY, N5LYB, and KD5GM/NCS.

Have fun and...73 de KD5GM/NCS AR SK

PUBLIC SERVICE EVENTS

Volunteers needed for the following:

- Jan. 14th (1996)—Sunday**
Houston-Tenneco Marathon
Contact: Carl Hacker—KB5LDY
(713) 977-9754
- Mar. 10th—Sunday**
K-9 Fun Run
Contact: Steve Dunkelberger—N5JBL
(713) 781-6703

The next issue of The B-VARC Bulletin, will include a set of guidelines to be followed for public service events.

THE EPICUREAN HAM

by Carl Hacker—KB5LDY

This recipe is from the Love Creek Orchards' (Medina, Texas) *Adams Apple Cookbook* as modified by Steve and Janice Bias of the Chuckle Wagon Cookers. Steve and Janice report that this dish tastes best when prepared and served outdoors. They say it serves 6, but they admit not ever having fed amateur radio operators.

- 12 inch Dutch Oven
- 32 Mesquite briquettes (18 to start)
- 8 Medium carrots
- 2 Granny Smith apples
- 2 Red Delicious apples
- 2 Tablespoons Butter
- 2 Tablespoons Butter (melted)
- ½ Cup Orange juice
- ½ Cup Brown sugar
- ¼ Teaspoon Ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon Ground cinnamon
- 1 Small bag of marshmallows
- 1 Small jar of Maraschino cherries

Wash carrots and apples. Peel carrots and cut into ¼ inch slices. Preheat Dutch oven with 18 briquettes on the bottom. In the Dutch oven melt butter, add carrots, place lid on oven, and cook carrots for 20 minutes. Stir every 6 minutes. Mix well in a small bowl: brown sugar, ground cinnamon, ground ginger, and set aside. Core and slice apples into ¼ inch rings, and set aside. When carrots have cooked for 20 minutes, add apple rings and drizzle orange juice over all. Sprinkle brown sugar mix over all. Set up Dutch oven with 17 briquettes on top and 8 under the bottom (350°F) and bake for 20 minutes. Remove Dutch oven from the bottom briquettes. Garnish with marshmallows and maraschino cherries. Bake from top for 10 minutes more. Serve from the Dutch oven.

PROFILES

Steve Gottlieb—WA5OEN

This past November 3, I passed the 30th anniversary of earning the most basic of amateur radio privileges—my novice license. I got my start in the hobby like so many others, listening to international broadcast and an occasional QSO on 80 AM on old tube type shortwave radios.

In the mid-60's, Otis—K5SWK, was one of my role models, but he was unaware until earlier this year when we met on 3080 AM. Paul—WA5ABR, who sometimes checks in on 145.47MHz in the mornings, was licensed and lived in Port Arthur, where I would occasionally spend weekends. Sadly, my dad, who was a WWII radio operator at 29 wpm CW, had absolutely no interest in ham radio.

I eventually bought Paul's Griefkit DX-60 transmitter and a Hallicrafters S-76 receiver for my first station. I received my general ticket in October 1966 after entering the Navy, and my advanced in May 1968. I operated W6DCM at the Fleet Antisubmarine Warfare School in San Diego, as well as WA5OEN/1/4/MM R1 & R2 on the U.S.S. Glover (AGDE-1).

I am currently active on .47 most every day. I am also having a contest with Larry—WD5DRB, as to who can work all states on 40m CW. We've been at it for over a year and Larry is winning, but wait 'til he hits the Alaska, Hawaii brick wall—I catch up!

de WA5OEN SK

HIGH-TECH NEWS

by Irv Smith—KK5QQ

The high-tech world is here! No matter which ladder rung you are on now, there's always another one higher.

Telephone Answering Machine: Even the hardest-core opponents among Jane's friends five years ago now have them. (Please, keep the outgoing announcement short!) If you don't want a machine in your home, get the telephone company's on-line version. It makes it easy to retrieve messages when not at home.

Fax Machine: A lower-end machine is adequate. Functions as a basic copier. (Take the slick paper copy to a neighborhood copy shop if you want a longer-lasting record.) Handy for all sorts of things, such as making hotel reservations and ordering stuff. A built-in answering machine takes care of the problem of which device answers first. (I don't know how they interface with the telco answering service mentioned above.) Functions as a rudimentary scanner to get photos into your computer. I can show you how to do this without needing 2 phone lines. In lieu of a stand-alone machine, you can use your

computer's fax modem, but it will receive only if the program is running and on-line. The fax modem is handy to send directly those documents already in your computer, such as a letter in your word processor, or to dash off a quick Fax Note, say, to complement a TV station for running a show you like.

Computer: They are getting more powerful and less expensive. Numerous tasks around the house (e.g., making labels for holiday cards if you send them) are a snap for the computer. And, it is essential for the next step:

Modem: This is a device that hooks your computer up to the telephone line. Once you have a modem, you are ready to proceed to:

On-Line Service: Basic cost is about \$10/month. E-mail is extremely handy for communicating with other people (e.g., your brother in Bangkok). In 1995, more e-mail letters will be sent than snail-mail letters. Also, once you are on-line, you can receive and send bulletins on B-VARC matters, as well as any hobby interest you may have. It is almost scary how much information is out there, if you just know how to look for it.

Second Telephone Line: Worth the \$20/month or so if you have more than one person in the household. Put your new fax machine and computer on the new line. You can also use it just as a plain old telephone.

ISDN Telephone Circuit: Very new concept for ordinary homes. Opens door for higher-speed computer communications. Monthly cost not bad, but does require some rather expensive interface equipment.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

**Professor Sir Oliver Lodge (1851-1940):
Forgotten Father of Radio??**

You may imagine the scene. It is August 14, 1894 at a meeting in Oxford of the British Association, attended by the leading scientists and engineers of the day. Thompson, Fleming & Muirhead are in the audience in the Clarendon Lecture Theatre. On the demonstration bench is a curious apparatus which features, amongst other items, a Kelvin marine Galvanometer and a Muirhead Morse inker. The lecturer is a well-known man of about 45 with a black beard and all the

gravitas of what he is: the Professor of Experimental Physics at University College, Liverpool. His name is Oliver Lodge.

The subject of his talk is on the work of Hertz, who had died the previous January, but he goes further and mentions his own work with "Hertzian waves" (Lodge had his paper published a month after Hertz). During the lecture, the galvanometer flickers, and the inker traces a mark on the paper without visible influence. Some 60m away, in the Clarendon Laboratory, an assistant is sending Morse code.

Sir Ambrose Flemming later wrote: "he was able...to send any letter of the alphabet in the Morse Code and consequently intelligible messages...It is, therefore, unquestionable that on [this] occasion Lodge exhibited electric wave telegraphy over a short distance."

Sadly, the Professor does not seem to have thought of or even cared about the commercial possibilities of his remarkable work, at least at that time. He was in a dispute with William Preece who was Engineer-in-Chief of the Post Office, and it was to Marconi that Preece turned a couple of years later when that young inventor came to England.

Lodge invented the concept of tuning as we now know it (he called it "syntony"), and showed that the period of the waves was proportional to $2 * \pi * \sqrt{L * C}$, and obtained a patent. He set up a syndicate with Alexander Muirhead in 1901 to exploit the commercial aspects. In 1902, Lodge was knighted for his work.

Lodge sued Marconi for infringement of patent in 1910 and judgment was reached in 1911. Marconi settled with Lodge and bought the patent for undisclosed sums in 1911.

(Contributed to the newsletter by Claude Sessions—K5HFY. The article is paraphrased by Dave—G8UYZ and based heavily on material supplied by Liverpool University (Mr. Bamber & Mr. Edwards), including two reprints of articles by B.A. Austin and R.W. Burns.

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REMINDER . . .

The deadline for articles to be placed in the B-VARC Bulletin is the 15th of each month. Please make every effort to have your article(s) to me by that date. If you know that you will not be able to meet the deadline but are planning to contribute to the newsletter for that month, you may call me to make special arrangements. Otherwise, if I do not have your article(s) by the deadline, it/they will not be published in that issue. Thank you for your cooperation.

—The Editor



the B-VARC BULLETIN

The Monthly Publication of the
BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB
Serving the Greater Houston Area
(Club Call Sign—KC5OIG)

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The Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club (B-VARC) was originally organized in 1978, primarily as an emergency communications group available to assist the communities of Missouri City and Stafford, when required. Since that time, B-VARC has grown and expanded its activities to become the most active HAM radio club in the southwest Houston area.

Today, B-VARC is truly a general-interest club with an impressive record of Public Service. The commitment to service has been recognized by the Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL) with the coveted status of Special Service Club. We are proud of our members who represent the finest in Amateur Radio. Membership is not limited to licensed operators, but is open to anyone with an interest in Amateur Radio. Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month, at the Sugar Land Community Center. Talk-in assistance is available on the 145.47, 444.55 and 442.5 MHz repeaters.


To obtain information about the club, its activities, or about joining B-VARC, contact Betty Wilcox—KA0TEN, at (713) 859-6512

B-VARC MEETING SCHEDULE		B-VARC EATING SCHEDULE
Thursday, January 4th 7:30 p.m.	Board of Directors Meeting Sugar Land Community Center Open to <u>All</u> B-VARC Members	Saturdays—7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.—Location to be announced. Stay tuned to the Monday night net for more info.
Thursday, January 11th 6:30 p.m.	B-VARC Annual Banquet	3rd Friday Dinners—6:30 p.m. SHARP! Locations announced each month

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