



BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 2003

VOLUME 27 ISSUE 9

Emergency Vehicle Showcased at BVARC Meeting



BVARC members gather in front of the TARMA trailer

Joe Fanning (N6RRJ) and Rodney Rod (KD5HQK) brought the emergency response trailer they designed and outfitted to the September BVARC meeting. Officially named the Texas Amateur Radio Mutual Aid (TARMA) trailer, it might otherwise be called the "trailer that has everything". The trailer is available to any group assisting in disaster relief, provided they pay for gas and agree to be responsible for it. The outside of the trailer sports a variety of antennas, suitable for frequencies used by hams, local firefighters and law enforcement, ordinary citizens and (gasp) even CB operators.

You will find radios to match are inside the trailer. There is a portable repeater, complete with generator, batteries, and antenna, that two people can roll out of the trailer via a ramp. The list of supplies doesn't stop with just radio gear, though. In addition to food, water and first aid supplies, there are manuals for all the equipment, tools, and enough spare parts to start a small electronics store. There are chemical protective suits and respirators for two people, as well as a Geiger counter. Most of the equipment is stored in cabinets suspended from the side of the trailer, leaving enough room for approximately six

people. One fixed and two pull down desks serve as comfortable ham stations.

The trailer has already seen service during the Shuttle disaster.

If you want to find out how your group might use the trailer or donate money to help Joe recover the \$16,000 of his own money that he put into the project, you can contact Rodney at 832 912-1441

So, Who Wants to Be President?

Elections are coming up in November and it is time for members to step up and volunteer. This December will mark the end of the 2 year term of BVARC President, Mike Hardwick.

Recording secretary and one at large position will also be vacated at this time. These positions must be filled for club functions to continue. The Presidency must be filled by a club member with a General class license or higher. Elections will be held in conjunction with the Chili Supper during the November General Membership Meeting. If you can provide a small amount of your time and want to help the club to continue into the future please contact me by phone at 281-277-5886 or by e-mail at kd5o@texas.net. BVARC's future depends on membership participation.

Rag Chew Net

By Joe Morgan, K5JWM

NOTE FREQUENCY CHANGE 3910 KHz

3910 KHz +/-3KHz Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

Just WHAT IS the Rag Chew Net? Well it's a chance for you to get on the low bands and hang out with other BVARC members, as well as hams from around the south central US! WHAT?? Don't have voice privileges? Got a short-wave receiver? Dial in and listen, then check in using the telephone number announced at the beginning of each net.

08/06/03 K5JWM, KE5SR, K5CEK, KA5JKI, KG5RQ, KB5WBL K5VRJ, AB5BA, WD6CQO, N5CPA, K5LBU, KB5FKD5WHD AD5KB, K5LJ, K5HFX, KD5O .check-ins(17)

08/13/03 K5JWM, K5CEK, N5CPA, KA5JKI, KG5RQ, K5VRJ AB5BA, K5LJ, KE5SR, W5HFF,

KB5F, KB9WVG.check-ins(12) 08/20/03 K5JWM, N5CPA, K5VRJ, AB5BA, KA5JKI, WB5VYR KB5F, K5CEK, K5HFX, KG5RQ, K5LJ. check-ins(11)

08/27/03 K5JWM, KE5SR, K5CEK, N5CPA, K5VRJ, AB5BA KB9WVG, N5VXU, K5LBU, KB5F, K5HFX, N5MSK, WB5VYR WA5VRB, K5LKI, W5UFX, WB5QXT, K5IHV. check-ins(18)

07/30/03 K5JWM, K5CEK, N5CPA, W5HFF, KA5JKI, K5LJ WA5VRB, KG5RQ, WB5VYR, N5MSK, K5VRJ, AB5BA. check-ins(12)

Ham-Radio Cam Built For Outer Space

By Alan Boyle, MSNBC

The international space station also happens to be the world's highest radio station -- and now the groundwork is being laid for direct transmission of pictures as well as sound between Earth and outer space. The SpaceCam1 project could be up and running as soon as next year, amateur-radio volunteers say.

THE RADIO system would be separate from the multibillion-dollar satellite network that NASA uses to communicate with the station. Although it's called a *slow-scan television system*, SpaceCam1 can send only stills, and not full-motion video. But unlike NASA's system, the SpaceCam1 feed would be freely accessible to schools and radio users around the world, said Miles Mann, one of the project's managers.

"Anybody with a police scanner and a simple outdoor antenna will be able to receive images directly from the space station when we put them on the air," Mann told MSNBC.com.

The project was developed jointly by Mann's MAREX-MG club and by Amateur Radio on the International Space Station, or ARIS\$, the volunteer effort that manages the orbital outpost's ham operation.

With NASA's blessing, space station astronauts use the amateur-radio equipment as an unofficial channel to chat with family, friends, operators and particularly school students. Just last week, a remote-controlled Progress cargo ship delivered new ham equipment to the station, and the SpaceCam1

equipment could go up on a similar Progress flight next January.

Frank Bauer, ARIS\$' international chairman, said the slow-scan television system represents a significant step toward turning the space station into a full-fledged broadcast TV station.

"Some of the plans are to have a video capability several years down the road -- a live video uplink and downlink," he told MSNBC.com. "That's some of the vision of where we're going. I think we've got the foundation now."

HYBRID MEDIUM

Slow-scan television, or SSTV, is a hybrid of audio, imagery and data that's been around since the late 1950s. Shuttle astronauts traded the first ham-TV images back and forth in 1985, and Mann helped get Russia's Mir space station wired for SSTV in 1998.

SpaceCam1 will be "a whole generation different," Mann said: A standard-looking Webcam plugs into one of the astronauts' laptops, and software translates the Webcam imagery into audio data. Those signals then pass through cables to the ham-radio equipment, which transmits the screech of data down to Earth. On the ground, radio receivers pick up the signals and pass them to a computer for conversion back into on-screen images.

Radio operators can use the same system to send imagery up to the space station. The signal range should be about 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers), Mann said. SpaceCam1 transmissions will be

compatible with SSTV software that is already being sold for terrestrial use, and Mann said a free "receive-only" version of the SpaceCam1 software would be made available over the Web.

SMALL PACKAGE, BIG CAPABILITY

Bauer said the only pieces of equipment that need to go up on the Progress are the cables and a hardware conversion device that's smaller than a computer mouse.

Once the system is up and running, space station astronauts could point their Webcam out the window and set the software to send down the equivalent of a 2-by-3-inch (5-by-7.5-centimeter) image automatically every 2 minutes. They could send and receive snapshots, or beam down pictures of themselves while they're chatting with schoolchildren on another ham frequency. Earthbound amateur-radio users could even use the space station as a relay station.

"Somebody in California could send a picture to somebody in New England just by communicating through the space station," Bauer said.

If you include the value of all the volunteer labor, the cost of developing SpaceCam1 would be on the order of \$50,000, Mann said. The components are currently being tested for space worthiness, and they're due to be shipped to Russia in November. Mann had high praise for Bauer and the ARISS team, which built the hardware: "They did all the tons of paperwork. ... We could not get to space today without his team's help."

Bauer cautioned that the delivery of the equipment in January isn't absolutely, positively guaranteed, since it's up to space station managers to determine what supplies go on which flight. But whether SpaceCam1 goes live sooner or later, the system should give the general public better access to the view from space.

"The infrastructure that's required to do a contact through the space agency channels is very expensive, and what's done in the ham-radio community is very inexpensive, with a lot of volunteers," he said.

The system also will give students more of a learning experience, Bauer said:

"The students are making the contact, the students are involved, and the students are tracking the space station. ... It produces an element of teamwork, and as anybody knows, the only way you really learn is by doing it yourself."

(C) Copyright 2003, MSNBC. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

Results of the September VE Session

by John Moore, KK5NU

BVARC administered the ARRL-VEC Amateur Radio Examination session that was held on Tuesday, Sept. 9th at HCC's Scarcella Technology Campus here in Stafford.

MEMBERS OF THE VE TEAM:

- Dennis D. Deitrich, W5DDD
- Larry Jacobson, K5LJ
- John Moore, KK5NU
- George Ontiko, KM5VP
- Don Schexnailder, AB5IV

Two examination elements were administered during the evening to two applicants. One unlicensed candidate received his new Technician license; and a Technician licensee upgraded to General, with the total number of elements passed being 2. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was 100%. Congratulations to the following who passed an exam and/or upgraded:

- Mark C. Williams KD5ZBX Technician
- Abdo G. Azar KD5YSX General

Many thanks to all the team members and assistants who volunteer their valuable time and effort each month. All of us at BVARC thank everyone at HCC Scarcella Technology Center for making these excellent classroom facilities available to us for our exams each month.

Amateur Radio Legal Issues List

by Paul Gray, N0JAA

Amateur Radio in the 21st Century is being bombarded on every side by attempts to take away spectrum or eliminate the service altogether. It is time for us as operators to get up off of our collective padding and do something to defend our hobby against those who would steal our frequencies.

To this end, I have created an email list known as the "Amateur Radio Legal Issues List." Its purpose is to discuss legal issues, distribute news concerning the defense and preservation of our hobby, educate Amateur Radio operators in what they can do to defend and preserve the hobby, and then disseminate this information to other operators so that they, too, can join the fight to preserve and protect Amateur Radio.

If you are interested in being part of such a list, please send a blank email to arli-subscribe@topica.com, or email me at n0jaa@aol.com and I will send you an invitation to join.

EPO THE ELECTRONIC SOURCE

NEW & SURPLUS ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS

ELECTRONIC PARTS OUTLET

3753 FONDREN ROAD
HOUSTON TX, 77063
713-784-0140
FAX 713-784-9740

SURPLUS INVENTORIES
PURCHASED
www.epe-houston.com

Southeast Houston
Between Richards & Westpark

SHIP TO:
9901 LIPAN
HOUSTON, TX 77063
02/03

Public Service Events

By Mike Hardwick, N5VCX, President

Here are a few events for the next few months. Come out and help and put your license and radio to a good use. If you like the hobby, this is one of the best ways to promote the hobby and help a worthy cause at the same time. Remember, one of the main reasons for amateur radio is to help the community. If interested in these events, call me and I will send you the information. 713-771-4625 or e-mail n5vcx@arrl.net.

Moonlight Ramble Bike Ride October 12, 2003

Shriner's Fall Classic Bike Ride October 18, 2003

Wings Over Houston Air Show October 18/19, 2003

Jamboree Over the Air (JOTA) October 18/19, 2003

20K Warm-up Run October 19, 2003

Novemberfest Bike Ride November 8, 2003

25K Warm-up Run November 9, 2003

30K Warm-up Run December 7, 2003

Houston Marathon January 18, 2004

Frost Bike 50 bike ride February 1, 2004

MS150 Bike Ride April 17 & 18, 2004

0203

STORAGE USA[®]

Mark A. Austin
Diane Austin
Management Team

2222 SW FREEWAY
HOUSTON, TX 77098

PHONE (713) 807-0900
FAX (713) 807-7134
www.sus.com

President's Corner

By Mike Hardwick, N5VCX, President

Another year is quickly coming to an end. With this, three positions will be open on the board of directors of the club. We need members to step up and help with club functions and management of the club. Without your help or support the club will not last. If you would like to help, contact Kevin Foto, KD5O and let him know that you are interested.

Where has everyone gone? When I joined BVARC about 10 years ago, the 145.470 repeater was one of the most active. Today I can listen for hours and never hear a soul. I know that in the past there were problems both with the repeater as well as interference. The interference has not been on the repeater for nearly two years and the repeater is working well (most of the time). So dust off your radio and start talking. If not on the "47" then on one of the other 50 or so repeaters in the Houston area.

Don't forget BVARC is holding the 3rd Annual Mix-N-Match Swap Meet on February 28th, 2004. Volunteers are needed to help with this club function. The entire community center will be available for the club to use. There will be a tailgate area at the back of the community center as well as tables inside. If you are interested in helping, contact one of the board of directors and let them know.

73's

N5VCX

Upcoming Hamfests

Nov 8th - CLARC Hamfest Bay area community center - 9:30 AM -2:00 PM, 5002 NASA ROAD 1 Seabrook Texas Entry \$4, Tables \$10 (\$15 at door) John AJ5TT@arrl.net or 281-221-0739

Nov 15th - Austin Radio Roundup, the AARC-ARO hamfest is back! St Louis Catholic Church 7601 Burnet Rd, Jeff N5MNW@arrl.net or Lori KM5MQ@arrl.net 512-255-6753

Feb 1st - Georgetown Superbowl Sunday Swapfest - San Gabriel Park, Exams- 8:30A.M. Setup-10AM, open to public 12noon-3PM, www.wcarc.com

Feb ?? - Smithville Swapfest - Bastrop ARC, open to public, <http://www.qsl.net/kb5yae/>

Feb 28th - BVARC Mix-N-Match Swap Meet Sugar Land Community Center setup 7:30 to 8:30 Open at 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Contact Mike at <http://www.hal-pc.org/~bvarc/> or n5vcx@arrl.net for more information.

March 20 - Brenham ARC Swapfest - Contact Dan Lakenmacher, N5UNU, 10312 Highway 36 N Brenham, TX 77833 Phone: 979-836-8739 Email: llakenmacher@yahoo.com <http://www.alpha1.net/~barc>

