



BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

JANUARY 2009

VOLUME 33 ISSUE 1

BVARC Annual Banquet – Friday January 16th

The annual banquet will take place at the Salt Grass Steak House (same place as the past many years) on Friday evening, January 16th, from 7 until 9 PM. We will have the same large room on the NE end of the restaurant and Mike, N5VCX, has out done himself by upping the service level this year, hoping to please all in attendance. After libations and victuals, the BVARC annual service awards will be presented by Frosty, K5LBU, our President, and we will have a special treat this year of a photo/slide show of BVARC's 2008 activities.

So come on out and bring your favorite YL, XYL or OM. You are welcome to arrive at anytime (just go to the bar area, if you arrive early), but the BVARC festivities start at 7 PM sharp. The Salt Grass Steak House is located in Sharpstown, on the outbound service road of the Southwest Freeway (HWY 59), just southwest of Beechnut St., between the Embassy Suites hotel and David Taylor Cadillac. Should you have any questions, please contact, Rick, W5RH, our VP, at rhiller@sdicgm.com

Note: The banquet is in-lieu of the general membership meeting in January.

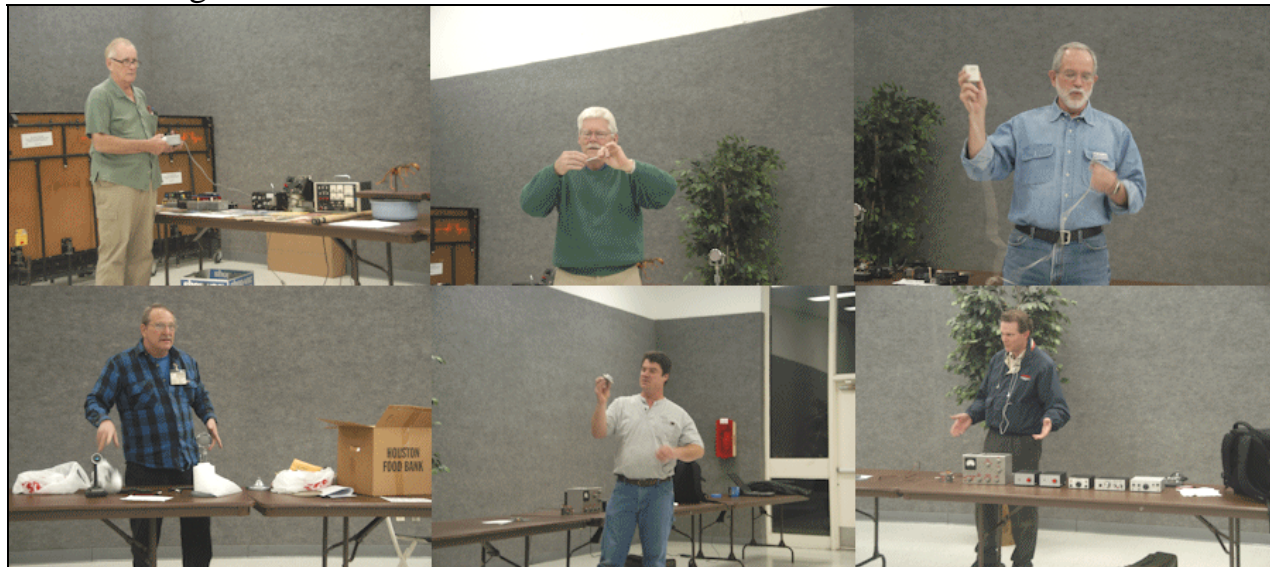


December meeting

Our December 10th meeting was the BVARC Annual Homebrew Night and we were certainly treated to a gaggle of different projects from a full size 10 meter parasitic array to an array of microphone implementations, along with QRP and test gear. The presentation by each Ham was very entertaining and many questions were asked, so a good time was had by all. Participants were, John, KE5KSC; Pete, KD5QPX; Tom, W5TOM; Bill, WS5H; Rick, WD5L and David, KD7THJ.

Prizes were awarded for 3 Ham Radio oriented projects and one non-Ham project. The Ham Radio winners were: David for his excellent Moxon 10 meter array; Rick, for his mass of home built QRP gear; and Bill for his very intriguing D-104 microphone restoration and collection. John owned up to win the well deserved 'booby' prize for his display of masterful test and audio gear. The prizes (two QRP transmitter kits, an iambic key kit and a 2000 ARRL Handbook) were donated by the estate of Mack, W5EET, and by Rick, W5RH. Judging the contest was Ross, W5HFF, Larry, K5LJ and Rick, W5RH. (Note: Although not a prize winner, Tom, W5TOM, had an impressive group of interestingly brewed gear with homemade microphones and other accessories adapted to his various modes of operating. Visit www.W5TOM.com for some insight into Tom's radio world.)

Home Brew Night Presenters



John Laughlin, Tom Morton, Pete Sauermilch, Bill Stone, David Elsner and Rick Covert

Meeting nights for the first half of 2009

Because Sugar Land will only reserve the Community Center for 6 months at a time, here is a list of the meeting nights through June. Note January there is no General Membership Meeting as we have the Annual Banquet in it's stead. Note that February had to be scheduled on the third Thursday. The others are on the second Thursday as usual.

19th Feb 3rd Thursday
12th March 2nd Thursday
9th April 2nd Thursday
14th May 2nd Thursday
11th June 2nd Thursday.

President's Message

Greetings fellow BVARC members,

I hope that all of you had a very great Christmas and that you found your stocking filled with what you needed and one or 2 things you wished for. I have enjoyed being away from the school and the other teachers along with the administrators but do miss some of the good students.

Well if you do any DXing 20 meters has been good to Europe starting about 7AM till about noon each day. 18 has also been open to Europe as well.

It has been good to have Doug back to breakfast this last 2 Saturdays and to also see so many members each week. So if you can get up early on Saturdays come join us for a good time and good food.

Also don't forget to mark on your new 2009 calendar the date of the Banquet. Which is the 16th of Jan.

73', Frosty, K5LBU

Coming Up

Chevron Houston Marathon, And Half Marathon and 5k Run

January 18, 7 am
See letter below.

Frost Bike 50 Bike Ride

January, 2009. More information next month

RESULTS OF THE December 9th
B-VARC AMATEUR EXAMINATION SESSION
by: John Moore, KK5NU

B-VARC sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examination session that was held on Tuesday, December 9, 2008 at HCC's Scarcella Technology Campus here in Stafford.

MEMBERS OF THE VE TEAM:

Dennis Dietrich, W5DDD
Jeffery Fussell, KD5VGE
Larry Jacobson, K5LJ
John Moore, KK5NU
George Ontko, KM5VP

Nine examination elements were administered during the evening to nine applicants. Four new Technician class licenses were attained; one upgrade to General class, and two Amateur Extras, with the total number of elements passed being 7. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was 77.8%.

Congratulations to the following who attained a license and/or passed an exam:

Eugene J. Antosh	- KB5JJW	- General
Brian J. Bessire	- {KE5YOD}	- Technician
Christopher J. Knight-	{KE5YOC}	- Technician
William J. McNally	- K5YDO	- Amateur Extra
Umar A. Mekkaoui	- {KE5YOB}	- Technician
Eric H. Moeller	- N5FOG	- Amateur Extra
Kelvin L. Smith	- {KE5YOA}	- 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 everyone at HCC Scarcella Technology Center for making these excellent classroom facilities available to us for our exams each month.

..... 73



THE BVARC Rag Chew Net

December check-ins

3910 KHz +/-3KHz Wednesdays at 7:00pm, John Whiteman, K5LKJ, Net Coordinator

12/03/08, K5LKJ (NCS), W5RJA (Schulenburg), K5LOT, K5LBU, WS5H, KC5IGM, K5NDB, W5TOM, N5CPA, AF5T, K1YP (Melbourne, FL), K5LJ, KD5YVQ, W5RCP (Putnam), W5HFF, W5RH, KJ5SS, WA5CYI, K5IZO. (19 Check-Ins)

12/10/08, K5LKJ (NCS), K5CEK, KJ5SS, K5LBU, WS5H, N5CPA, K5NDB, AF5T, K5ADA, K5LJ, AA5OA, WA5CYI, W5RH, KA5MEI, KD5RDR, WS5H/KE5NDN, N5ZUA. (17 Check-Ins)

12/17/08, K5LKJ (NCS), K5CEK, KJ5SS, W5UHZ (Beaumont), W5RH, WA5FMK, N5CPA, W5TOM, K5LJ, K5NDB, K5LOT, WS5H, WA5CYI, AA5OA, KE5TRZ (San Antonio), AF5T, KD5YVQ, WB4KTF, KE5VRJ, N5PDQ (Kirbyville), W5RJA (Schulenburg), KA5MEI. (22 Check-Ins)

12/24/08, N5CPA (NCS), K5CEK, WA5CYI, WS5H, K5LBU, AA5OA, WS5H/KE5NDN, K5LOT, N5ZUA. (9 check-ins)

(T) = telephone check-in

Thanks, Regards. John Whiteman, K5LKJ

Minutes of December 4th 2008 Board of Directors meeting of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club:

Charles Frost called the monthly Board of Directors meeting for the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club to order at 7:15 PM on December 4th, 2008 at Fudrucker's, 11445 Fountain Lake Drive, Stafford, TX. Attending were: Charles Frost, K5LBU; (Pres.); Arnold Knoche, K5ADA (At-Large Dir.); Sid Sherwood, N5ZXD (Treas./Cor. Sec.); Peter Sauermilch, KD5QPX (Rec. Sec.); Bill Stone, WS5H (At-Large Dir.); Rick Hiller, W5RH (At-Large Dir.); Mike Hardwick, N5VCX (Past Pres.); Norma Stone, KE5NDN; Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM; John Chauvin, K5IZO; Randy Pollard, AK5G; Ross Lawler, K5HFY; David Barber, K5NDB; Dwayne Jones (KB5YTA); Angle Abbott-Jones (KC5KRV), Billy Jones (N5EVD), and Ed Benya Jr. (N5UKS).

- 1) Minutes for the November 2008 meeting were approved as they appear in the November 2008 newsletter.
- 2) Treasurer's Report was presented to and approved by the Board.
- 3) Old Business:
 - a) General Membership Meeting Date:
 - i) Frost summarized the results of the "straw vote" from the November General Membership Meeting.
 - (1) 20 voted to change to the 3rd Thursday.
 - (2) 4 voted to change to the 1st Thursday.
 - (3) 10 voted to keep the meeting on the 2nd Thursday.
 - ii) A lively discussion took place with the following views presented.
 - (1) Any change on the General Membership Meeting date should only take place if the membership wants that change to take place.
 - (2) Changing the meeting date runs the risk that there will be a reduction in membership. It was observed that the last time BVARC changed meeting dates (some years ago), there was an immediate loss of members. There was some discussion on this matter.
 - (3) If the reason for moving the BVARC meeting date is a conflict with TDXS (Texas DX Society), then why not let TDXS move their meeting night. If TDXS has many members, then it is not unreasonable for BVARC to accommodate. If TDXS membership is small, then BVARC would not be smart to change its date. There was a general disagreement at the meeting as to how many members TDXS has. One opinion had TDXS membership at 25 (as reported by ARRL), another at 160.
 - (4) It was suggested that BVARC and TDXS hold one or more joint meetings during the year. We already meet on the same night and the BVARC meeting place is large enough to fit the need.
 - (5) Any move to some other date is likely to create as many new conflicts as it would eliminate. This includes not only other ham clubs but also other organizations.
 - (6) At this time, BVARC has the Sugar Land Community Center reserved for the 3rd Thursday. No one has checked into availability for any other night of the month. It is likely that changing the meeting date will leave BVARC without a place to meet.
 - (7) Any potential change in the General Membership Meeting date, requires a change in the BVARC By-Laws. In addition, this type of change requires a full participation of the club because it affects everyone. For this reason, any potential change in meeting dates is many months away.
 - b) 2009 Greater Houston Hamfest:
 - i) Knoche presented to the board the hamfest cost estimate. Chauvin requested that the board make available \$4,800 to finance the activity. The board voted in favor of funding at \$4,800 level.
 - ii) Kirk Kendrick is working on having on-line registration, though to a limited extent.
- 4) New business:
 - a) Club Web Site Server: Jones was at the meeting on behalf of the owner River Oaks Car Stereo (ROCS). ROCS has offered to BVARC the free use of their web server space to host all BVARC web pages. The owner of ROCS is making the server space available as a gift to BVARC to further the Amateur Radio hobby. Frost will look into the club's needs and how this offer fits those needs.
 - b) Ft Bend County Facility Space: Sauermilch reported that Ft. Bend County has made no further progress processing the BVARC request to use county property for a permanent station location.
 - c) Digipeater: Hardwick thinks construction of the Digipeater will be complete this weekend. He will deliver it to Stone for programming and site location.
 - d) Life Members: Knoche reported that BVARC has 5 new life members.
- 5) Other Business:
 - a) Hiller needs all nominations for club awards to be sent to him ASAP!

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM

Submitted by Recording Secretary, Peter Sauermilch, KD5QPX

BVARC Historical Vignettes – BVARC & Missouri City

Allen Mattis N5AFV, Club Historian

A previous Historical Vignette told the story of how BVARC was founded in 1977 for the primary purpose of providing emergency communications for the Fort Bend County area. On September 16, 1977 an organizational meeting was held at Westbury Methodist Church in southwest Houston. The second meeting took place two weeks later at the Missouri City Fire station on September 30, 1977. It was at this meeting that the first BVARC officers were elected.

For well over a decade BVARC had a close relationship with the Missouri City municipal government. The club met at the Missouri City fire station from September 1977 through September 1983. In 1982 and 1983, BVARC held its ARRL Field Day operation in the grassy area behind the fire station. In October 1983 the location for the general membership was moved to the Missouri City Municipal Building just across the street from the fire station. The B-VARC Bulletins from that time do not state why the move occurred, but a close and friendly relationship with the Missouri City municipal government continued. For a time in the mid-1980s, BVARC maintained an amateur radio station in the Police Department portion of the Missouri City Municipal Building. When BVARC began holding amateur radio VE sessions in 1985, the Missouri City Chief of Police was instrumental in securing a room in the municipal building for the club to use for the testing sessions.

In April and May 1987 the general membership meeting was moved back to the Missouri City Fire Station. This move was prompted by the final stages of construction for the new Missouri City Civic Center. When the new Civic Center opened, the BVARC general membership meeting was held there from June through December 1987. Meeting rooms in the new facility were separated by sliding walls that provided almost no barrier to noise. BVARC was assigned a meeting room that was adjacent to the room where a clog dancing club met. The noise from the music and clogging made it very difficult to conduct for BVARC to conduct a meeting. The Civic Center personnel were not able to find another room for the club to use, and in January 1988 the general membership meeting was moved back across the street to the Missouri City Fire Station. From January 1988 through May 1991 the BVARC general membership meetings were held at the fire station. In early 1991 the club was notified by Missouri City that the fire station would no longer be available for use as a meeting place. The upstairs room where BVARC had been meeting was being converted into a fitness center and weight room for the firemen to use.

At the next BVARC general membership meeting, the members were asked to help find a new meeting place. Bud King, K5CEK, came forward and offered to help the club secure a room at the Sugar Land Community Center. The Sugar Land Community Center was able to accommodate the club beginning in June 1991, except for September meeting, and Missouri City agreed to let BVARC use the fire station one last time in September. The last BVARC meeting held in the Missouri City Fire Station was on September 12, 1991, and it was the exceptional Pitcairn Island program where the MERA repeater was linked to Meralda Warren, VR5MW, over the 15-meter band so that club members could speak with her.

Almost all of the BVARC general membership meetings have been held in the Sugar Land Community Center since June 1991. Occasionally there has been a scheduling conflict and the club had to secure an alternate site, usually on short notice. It is important for a club like BVARC to have a reliable and regular meeting place, and both Missouri City and Sugar Land have played an important role in BVARC's history.



Monday Night NET Updates

Don't forget the Monday Night Public Service Net starts at **8 pm**, 145.47 (PL -123.0). The order of check-ins start with mobile units first then fixed stations. If you have something for the net, make sure you let Net Control know about it when you check in. We are looking for Net Control Operators. Contact any officer of BVARC if you are interested. Here are recent check-ins with control-ops:

9/15 - 24 - Bill, ws5h	10/20 - 0 - No NC	11/24 - 18 - Syd, n5zkd
9/22 - 20 - Pete, kd5qpx	10/27 - 24 - Pete, kd5qpx	12/1 - 20 - Cam, k5cam
9/29 - 21 - Sid, n5zkd	11/3 - 22 - Cam, k5cam	12/8 - 26 - Bill, ws5h
10/6 - 25 - Cam, k5cam	11/10 - 27 - Bill, ws5h	12/15 - 27 - Sid, n5zkd
10/13 - 26 - Bill, ws5h	11/17 - 19 - Mike, n5vcx	12/22 20 - Pete, kd5qpx

Control Ops needed for the Monday Night Net – n5zkd@arrl.net



Astronauts to astronaut: Austin students call Space Station

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Twelve Austin Elementary students spoke to an actual NASA astronaut as she orbited space.

By Marquita Griffin

Published:

Wednesday, December 10, 2008 2:25 PM CST

Twenty questions. Ten minutes. Twelve kids. One astronaut. These were the terms of the agreement more or less.

The Stephen F. Austin Elementary Astronauts journeyed to outer space Tuesday when they had a chance to talk and listen to the daily experiences of Expedition 18 crew member Sandra Magnus, who is orbiting Earth in space.

After a tedious application process, Austin Elementary was ultimately approved to participate in the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program.

It was an “astronaut-to-astronaut” conversation when Magnus, NASA astronaut and American engineer, briefly tapped into Austin Elementary on Tuesday to answer 20 questions from 12 curious and science-loving students while their peers, parents and teachers observed.

The 12 chosen students were suggested by their teachers, said Principal Bud Whileyman. While the students were upperclassmen, those picked to speak included boys and girls from different backgrounds and a special-needs student.

“We wanted a variety of students to represent (the school),” Whileyman said.

Also, the students picked “(weren’t) gun shy about getting up there to ask questions and have a strong interest in science,” he added.

Although proud and excited the school was one of many that would have a chance to connect with Expedition 18, Whileyman said he was nervous the connection wouldn’t be made and his students would be disappointed.

The application to connect with a Expedition 18 crew member was a long process, he said. Once approved, the school had to be fitted with the appropriate equipment to actually make the connection, which isn’t exactly guaranteed seeing that “anything could happen.”

Not to mention there was a small amount of time to make a secure connection.

“We had only a 10-minute window,” Whileyman said.

But everyone remained hopeful, preparing questions and timing the students so all the questions could be asked and answered.

After Holly McKee, the first student to ask a question, made the opening introduction to Expedition 18, much to everyone's surprise and excitement, Magnus's voice entered the gym loud and clear and without delay.

"It was amazing how clear (Magnus) was," Whileyman said. "I thought for sure it there would be static, like on a CB radio or something, but it wasn't."

From the safety plans behind spacewalking and training in zero gravity to the new system that converts urine to drinking water, Magnus gave the students her first-hand experiences of living in space.

"We can orbit the earth in 90 minutes," Magnus told Ryan Harris, who asked if time was the same in space as it is on Earth. "That means we have 45 minutes of sunlight and 45 minutes of darkness."

Some of the observing students sitting on the gym floor found that fact difficult to imagine, but pretty cool.

Still marveling from what she just experienced, a grandmother who came to witness the Expedition 18 conversation, said her granddaughter, just doesn't know how amazing this was.

"She was excited about it," the grandmother said. "But she won't truly know the importance of it until she's older and looks back on what she had a chance to do."



Note: These last 2 pictures are not from the copyrighted article and were downloaded from the BVARC website.



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George DiLetto KD0RW

BVARC Digipeater Operation is getting closer!

The BVARC digipeater project (funded by a grant from ExxonMobile that was requested by Alan Isaachsen, [KB2WF](#)) has moved a step closer to being operational. After Mike, [N5VCX](#), finally got the equipment assembled (it only took him 6 months!), it was picked up by Bill, [WS5H](#), to be programmed and tested. Bill has been working on programming of the TNC and getting the equipment operational. Over the next month or so, the digipeater will be tested in several different modes as well as different frequencies to determine the best for its final format. At the same time, a permanent home for the digipeater will be chosen from the 5 possible locations. Once the finally location is chosen, the digipeater will be installed which will give southwest Houston a new mode of communications for emergencies.

Thanks need to go out to Alan, Bill and Pete for all of their hard work on the digipeater project. Mike, [N5VCX](#)

UPDATE : The BVARC KK5W DIGIPEATER is up and running as testing in Sharpstown [EL29FQ](#) at [WS5H](#) QTH on 145.050 at 25 watts to provide relay to RED CROSS RMS server for weak mobile and fixed stations with success. One test on 090 relayed airmail from Sugarland to NW Houston [KB5HCD](#) thus providing a good bridge from FT. Bend to SW. Harris Co. and to NW. On Jan.1st we will switch from time to time to 090 when red cross server is down to connect to NW. Look for more info in future newsletter. Bill [WS5H](#)



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2008 Club Officers:

President:

Charles "Frosty" Frost, K5LBU
frosty1@pdq.net

Vice President: (Interim until voted)

Rick Hiller
rhiller@sdicgm.com

Corresponding Secretary/Treasurer:

Arnold Knocht, K5ADA
jakadaok@aol.com

Recording Secretary:

Pete Sauermilch
kd5qpx@arrl.net

Board Member:

David Barber, K5NDB

Board Member:

Bill Stone, WS5H
dragntow@wt.net

At Large Board Member

(Past President):
Mike Hardwick, N5VCX
n5vcx@worldnet.att.net

Club Happenings:

General Meeting

Second Thursday each month, 7:30 PM
Sugar Land Community Center,
226 Matlage Way

Board of Directors Meeting

First Thursday of each month, 7:00 PM
Fuddruckers, just South of the Fountains
Shopping Center on US 59 outbound..

Volunteer Examiner Program

BVARC administers Amateur License
Exams on the 2nd Tuesday of each month
at the HCC Scarcella Technology
Campus, 10141 Cash Rd. in Stafford.
Contact John Moore, KK5NU
jwm@hal-pc.org

Eating Schedule

Saturday morning breakfasts
Third Thursday dinner at 7:00 p.m.
Location announced in text of this edition.
Rag Chew Net
3910 KHz +/-3KHz Wednesdays
at 7:00 p.m.

Public Service Net

Monday night on 145.47 (PL 123.0) at
8:00 PM

BVARC EATING SCHEDULE

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SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST:

59 DINER, 7:30a.m., SW Freeway outbound service road, near Kirkwood.
NEW YORK COFFEE & BAGEL SHOP, 7:30a.m., 9720 Hillcroft.

THIRD FRIDAY DINNER: No regular 3rd Friday Dinner but the
ANNUAL BANQUET is on the 3rd Friday, January 16th from 7 to 9 p.m. at
the Salt Grass Steak House on the outbound side of the SW Frwy past the
Gessner exit.

OTHER HAM GROUPS:

WEDNESDAYS – WEDNESDAY LUNCH BUNCH

LUBY'S CAFETERIA, 10:30a.m., Bellaire Blvd. ½ blk. E. of Hillcroft.

WEDNESDAYS – AMSAT & QRP GROUP

PAPPAS BARBECUE, 11:30A.M., SW Corner Westheimer & Gessner.

UPCOMING FEATURED PRESENTATIONS

January 16 – Annual Club Banquet and Awards Night

Hamfests

(within 200 miles of Houston)

Hamfest info for the next few months. More information at:

<http://www.arrl.org/hamfests.html#listing>

10 Jan 2009

San Antonio Amateur Radio Fiesta

San Antonio Radio Club
Schertz Knights of Columbus Hall,
[509 Schertz Parkway](http://www.schertzknights.org), Schertz, TX
Talk-In: 146.940- (PL 179.9)
<http://w5sc.org/swapfest.htm>

7 Feb 2009

Williamson County ARC - Annual Swapmeet

VFW Post 8587
[1000 North College Street](http://www.wc-arc.org), Georgetown, TX
Talk-In: 146.640 (PL 162.2)
<http://www.wc-arc.org>

7 March 2009

BVARC GREATER HOUSTON HAMFEST

Ft. Bend County Fairgrounds, Rosenberg, TX
Details in next issue.



Monthly Publication of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club.
Serving Amateur Radio for Southwest Houston and Fort Bend County
Club Call sign – KK5W
BVARC Website: <http://www.bvarc.org>
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Claude Sessions, K5HFY, k5hfy@arri.net

Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club (BVARC) was organized in 1978, primarily as an emergency communications group available to assist the communities of Missouri City and Stafford when required. Since that time, **BVARC** has grown and expanded its activities to become the most active amateur radio club in the Southwest Houston and Fort Bend County area. BVARC is a Non-Profit Corporation classified by IRS as 501-(c)-(3).

Today **BVARC** is truly a general interest amateur radio club with an impressive record of public service. The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) has recognized the club's commitment of service with the coveted status of Special Services Club. We are proud of our members who represent some of the finest in amateur radio. Membership is not limited to licensed operators, but is open to anyone with an interest in amateur radio. Club meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Sugar Land Community Center, 226 Matlege Way. General membership dues are \$20.00 per year, with student dues \$10.00 per year, additional family members \$2.00 per member per year and life membership \$160.00.

BVARC also administers amateur radio license exams on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Houston Community College's Scarcella campus in Stafford. A Public Service Net is held each Monday at 8 p.m. on the 145.47 (minus offset, PL 123 tone) repeater & a rag chew net is held each Wednesday at 7 p.m. on 3910 KHz +/- 3 KHz.

To obtain information about joining **BVARC** or its activities, contact the club's "Elmer," Ross Lawler, W5HFF at 281-342-3340 or w5hff@yahoo.com or see the BVARC website: www.bvarc.org

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JANUARY 2009

**BRAZOS VALLEY
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FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

Annual Banquet, Friday, January 16.

*If your mailing label is
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to renew your membership!*