



# BVARC BEACON



Newsletter of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club  
AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT  
BEND COUNTY

JANUARY 2022

VOLUME 46 ISSUE 1

## January General Membership Meeting Thursday, January 13, 7:30PM

BVARC general meeting, via Zoom - Thursday, January 13 at 7:30pm  
K8ZT - Anthony Luscre will present on the topic of QRP.

Mr. Luscre is the Assistant Ohio Section Manager for Education Outreach for the ARRL. He has presented a variety of topics at various events (QSO Today, GQRP convention, etc.) He's an avid QRPer, among other interests. Check out his website at [www.k8zt.com](http://www.k8zt.com)

If you are on the BVARC reflector, you will receive the Zoom info several days before the meeting. If you are not on the Reflector, it will also show up on the BVARC website several days before the meeting.



## The Greater Houston HamFest is Cancelled for 2022, But.....

Due to the rise of COVID infections and other issues, **The Greater Houston HamFest** will not be held in 2022. However, after careful consideration and detailed planning (read - a spur of the moment thought), there will be a replacement. This year will mark the beginning of the **Greater Houston Tailgate** or the **GHT**.

This will be an informal event held at Duhacsek Park in Southwest Houston. The date is April 16<sup>th</sup> and will be held from 7 am to 3 pm. In addition to the tailgate, there will be license testing, exhibits, food sales, and equipment raffles. All tailgate sales will be held outdoors in the main parking lot of the facility with parking in the grass south of the parking lot.

Admission will be simple - \$5 per vehicle. Whether you are selling or buying, the entry fee will be \$5. People will be able to pay as they drive into the park and from there, they can either park to sell or park to buy.

The raffle will have two main prizes – an Icom IC-718 HF radio and an Anytone AT-D878UV11 DMR handheld radio. The raffle tickets will be sold at the tailgate and on-line.

More information for the GHT and the raffle tickets will soon be on the web site and weekly e-mail blast so stay tuned.

**Hope to see everyone at the Greater Houston Tailgate on April 16th!**

Greater Houston HamFest Committee

# The Prez Says

This year has been a wide and crazy ride for all of us. Between COVID, politics, the economy, and life in general, our lives have been changed in ways we would have never imagined. 2021 has put our lives in a preverbal blender. Most of us have gotten through it without a scratch but several of us have not. The difficulties have affected everything including, you guessed it, amateur radio.

After 18 months, the club finally had a face-to-face meeting in November with the annual chili supper and elections. It was well attended considering the circumstances around COVID. As always Daphne and Louanne did a wonderful job on serving the food. Also, Rick did an excellent job on organizing the elections. Thanks to all of them for their hard work.

The new year starts a new board of directors for the club. Even though there are not that many fresh faces on the board, there is still a lot of energy. Hopefully in the future, more people will step up to be on the board. I want to thank everyone that has volunteered their time to be on the board. I also want to thank the folks that stepped down this year. Remember it takes volunteers to keep the club up and running. Without them, the club dies.

January's general meeting will be a ZOOM only meeting. It will be about QRP and how to operate in a world of high-power transmitters. More information on the meeting is elsewhere in the newsletter. ZOOM meeting info will be posted on the web site and weekly e-mail blasts.

Due to COVID, there will not be an annual banquet in 2022. Hopefully later in the year, things will open so we can have a delayed banquet in the summer or fall.

Bayland Park has not confirmed the reservations for 2022 for the BOD meeting, testing and the ham radio school. Hopefully, I will have the confirmations in time for next months newsletter. In case you are wondering about the ham radio school, a room has been reserved for 4 hours every other month so we can have training classes. Ideas for class, let the BOD know.

Finally, the Greater Houston HamFest will not be held in 2022. Instead of the HamFest, there will be a tailgate in its place. It will be held on April 16<sup>th</sup> and Duhacsek Park in Sugar Land. More information is elsewhere in the newsletter.

Hopefully, everyone had a great Christmas and a wonderful New Year's celebration.

# The Radio Hotel – The EFHW-Things to Consider

(\*Beacon abridged version)

by Rick Hiller – W5RH

The EFHW or End Fed Half Wave antenna has been a very popular skyhook for the past few years. Reasons being that it provides a close to 50 ohm match on multiple HF Ham bands and it is easy to build and deploy. Most of the information on the web, etc. focuses on the construction and resultant SWR curves. I have seen little as far as how best to deploy the half wavelength wire. Deployment layout is questionable due to the fact that at the lowest fundamental frequency it is half wave length. Equivalent to a dipole in size and radiation pattern, but as you go up in frequency it turns into a multiple wavelength wire.  $\frac{1}{2}$  wl on 80 is 1 wl on 40, 2 wl on 20 and 4 wl on 10 meters.

**Things to consider.** How best should you deploy this wire to be advantageous radiation angle and pattern wise on multiple bands? My hypothesis is that it will be good on some bands, but not so good on others. If your goal is to make and deploy a multi-band antenna just to get on the air with little regard for the pattern produced then stop reading, put one up best you can and go make some contacts. But if you would like to achieve the best patterns, gain and lowest angles of radiation etc. please read on and let's see what we can find out.

The radiation patterns of antennas are heavily influenced by the surrounding environment. Height above ground affects both feed impedance and pattern. High voltage, end feeding gives a bit of a variance on feed impedance and the wide band 1:49 ratio transformer provides a reasonable primary impedance to match closely to 50 ohm feed line. If not close to 50 ohms, the internal ATU in your rig can usually handle the differential.

Physical deployment can be done as a sloping, tilted wire, an inverted V, a vertical (with the right tree height) and an inverted L. The issue is that, for example, the 80 meter version is 135 feet long and when fed on 40 meters it is two  $\frac{1}{2}$  wl's long. This can best be configured as an inverted L with  $\frac{1}{2}$  wl vertical and the other half horizontal. This gives a much more beneficial pattern than just a low to the ground dipole. Take this varying deployment scheme and apply it to the higher bands too. Maybe even folding in between  $\frac{1}{2}$  wl sections into drop down stub like sections, so that the other sections are in phase and create a gain issue. Remember that, as with all antennas, the EFHW is a compromise – not particularly efficient at either short or long ranges. But they will produce contacts, as any wire antenna of similar length and height will.

**To counterpoise or not to counterpoise.** There are quite a few convincing and persuasive arguments on-line concerning counterpoise use. Have a read of a few. Seems to me though, if you have the feed point right at your operating picnic table that you would at least use a ground rod and short wire. Otherwise the coax shield of a long feed line can (and will) be used as the counterpoise. A separate  $\frac{1}{4}$  wl wire at the lowest frequency just might suffice also. Google [www.aa5tb.com/efha.html](http://www.aa5tb.com/efha.html) or have a listen to Dave Casler's popular #494 video to see if that helps. (*Note: I'm not sure it does*)

One last point -- using EZNEC modeling analysis – if you use an 80 meter fundamental EFHW (135 feet long) you will get resonant points at 80, 40, 30, 20, 17,15,12 and 10. However, if you are using a 40 meter (65 feet long) fundamental length EFHW, you will only get nice resonant points at 40, 20, 15 and 10. **\*See the full unabridged article with graphics and pictures at [www.bvarc.org/tech-pages](http://www.bvarc.org/tech-pages)**

*Enjoy your hobby and be curious.....73...Rick W5RH*

# The Feed Point

“The “Feed point” is a window on the people that make our club what it is. We feature a member profile each month, so we all have a clearer picture of who and what BVARC really is.

But as we start a new year, I think it will be helpful to focus on the club itself, its history and what makes it important. Of course, hundreds of hams have played a role in the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club over the years. BVARC has been in existence since at least the mid-1970s when the Houston area was becoming the giant metropolis we occupy today. You could feel the “electricity” of the booming energy industry back then. And that electricity, that energy, permeated the ham radio hobby as well.

Our sprawling city had become so large, that the Houston Amateur Radio Club (HARC) was having a hard time serving its hundreds of members some of whom lived and worked thirty miles or more away from the club headquarters near the Medical Center.

And that urban sprawl provided the impetus for new clubs to pop up in suburban communities. In fact, BVARC President Mike Hardwick says there were more than 35 active ham clubs in the area at that time.

One of those clubs was on Houston’s Southwest side and came to be known as the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club. It grew through the eighties and really helped hams live up to our obligation to public service. The club even elected a public service event coordinator to keep those efforts working smoothly. Check out the old newsletters at <http://www.bvarc.org/newsletters.php>.

One of the early club projects was the MS-150 Bike Ride. In fact, The Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club was one of the first sponsors of that enormous fundraiser.

BVARC was super active in teaching and testing, providing would-be hams with an opportunity to learn and master the material needed to become licensed. By the 90’s, Hardwick states that our club was turning out 30 to 40 new hams per month.

But the start of the new century brought huge changes to our lives. The exploding influence of the internet fostered great upheaval in business and communication. Micro digital technology seemed to put a cell phone in every person’s life.

Ham radio was in transition as well. Operators seemed to have less time and energy for their hobby. Club participation declined.

But the club has been kept alive by stalwarts who continue to see the important role amateur radio plays in times of disaster, when smart phones are out of commission. It continues to help new hams find their way into what has become a multi-faceted hobby. And as Beacon editor John K5IZO points out, the club also provides an opportunity to meet new friends, find mentors (Elmers) and participate in group activities like Field Day and the Greater Houston Hamfest.

In fact, BVARC has enjoyed a resurgence in membership during Covid as people had more time at home to pursue their license and the hobby. Many of these newbies are interested in public service and that has always been a focus of our club.

BVARC, its leaders and its members have a lot to be proud of. The challenges we face going into 2022 include watching out for each other and honoring our legacy of public service.

--JP Pritchard, K5JPP

## BVARC Rag Chew Net

Below is the BVARC Rag Chew Net check-in information:

11/24/21, K5LKJ (NCS), W5TOM, AA5OA (Pearcy, AR), N5VCX, N5VCM, KA5MEI (Fort Smith,AR), W5RH, K5LJ, KE4DRF, W5ALW, W5TKZ, W5VOM, KG5LCR (Lake Worth). (13 Check-Ins)  
Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 83, SN = 34, A = 5, K = 1/Band Rpt: Fair

12/01/21, K5LKJ (NCS), W5TKZ, W5TOM, K5TNL (Spring), N4ELU, N5VCM, KI5HOC, K5LJ, K5IZO (Jasper), W5VOM, W5RH, WA5ANF (T), W1BG (Katy), KG5ICR (T), WD5L (T). (16 Check-Ins)  
Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 86, SN = 61, A = 16, K = 3 / Band Rpt: Fair

12/08/21, K5LKJ (NCS), K5JPP, KG5LJZ/5 (Clear Lake), W5TKZ, W5VOM, K5PGF, KI5HOC, K5LJ, W2WF (Katy). (9 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 76, SN = 13, A = 5, K = 1 / Band Rpt: Fair

12/15/21, K5LKJ (NCS), W2WF (Katy), KA5MEI (Fort Smith,AR), W5JEF, AA5OA (Pearcy, AR)(T), W5RH, WA5ANF (T), KI5HOC, KB7QL (Rustin, LA), K2MPP, W5VOM/5 (Port O'Connor), WD5L (T). (12 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 101, SN = 40, A = 5, K = 3/Band Rpt: Fair

(M) = mobile (P) = Portable (R) = Relay (RCS) = remote controlled station (T) = telephone check-in

Net conditions have been fair to good this month. Fire up the rig and learn what others are doing and share your experiences. Come join in the conversation each Wednesday evening.

Regards. John K5LKJ



Phelps Camelback Key: Circa 1860  
The “camel’s hump” was supposed to give it a better-balanced feel.

# Cutting Through the Static

## A column for Newies

My most recent newbie pursuit is Parks on the Air. It makes it possible to make a lot of SSB QSO's in a less dog-eat-dog environment than a contest. I was able to get out over the Thanksgiving weekend and on a follow-up weekend to try my hand at it. My first POTA adventure took me to Brazos Bend State Park, a magnificent getaway south of Richmond/Rosenberg.

As I soon learned, there are some items that need to be attended to before heading out. First, you should go to [parksontheair.com](http://parksontheair.com). Read the rules and code of conduct. I think it's very important to keep this pursuit fair and trustworthy. Then come to an understanding that the infrastructure of Parks on the Air is strictly voluntary. Activations and logging require a lot of backup effort, and the folks who help out with these "bookkeeping" duties do it out of love for the hobby. They need to be well treated.

Logging is a key part of this pastime so be sure to choose a way to log your QSO's before you head out. Anthony W5LIC suggested I use HAMRS (Windows, iOS, Android) because of its ease of use. You'll be uploading your log to an specific email address in the ADIF format.

Next up, go to [parksontheair.com](http://parksontheair.com), sign up or sign in and click on "POTA Spots" to see current activations and then click on "POTA Scheduler" to pre-set your trip to a park. The designation for Brazos Bend State Park is K-2992. You can look up the number of any previously activated park at the POTA website.



The Saturday I went there coincided with a recent trip there by Anthony W5LIC, and we ended up setting up in a picnic area (referred to as "day use area" by Texas Parks and Wildlife), just a couple of hundred feet from each other. We quickly realized that our signals were interfering with each other. Fortunately, we were equipped with band pass filters so neither one of us had to move

POTA operators will tell you that you may have to call CQ for quite some time get the flow of Q's coming. But there is a better way.

Unlike other contest pursuits in ham radio, spotting and re-spotting yourself is legit in POTA, and that procedure will pay off in a big way. Those who are hunting for a POTA QSO will often go the POTA website and look for spotted operators. Once spotted, you may find yourself at the intersection of Traffic Jam Blvd and Really Busy Ave. But if you don't have an internet connection to spot yourself at the park, you can ask a ham you're connecting with to spot you. Most are happy to do so.

As to logging during a pile up, I would suggest avoiding the use of your smartphone for logging purposes unless you're using a blue tooth keyboard. Otherwise, switching back and forth between the letters and numbers screens will really slow you down. Or you can go with paper and pencil. The solution I'm pushing toward is using a headset with a PTT pedal. That will keep my hands free to keep up with logging.

I love working POTA. At my age, it's less physical effort than camping but it still gets me out into nature. But beauty comes at a price. There's an entry fee to get into a Texas state park. And if you're doing POTA a lot, it's worth it to pay the one-time annual fee. See you in the park.

73, JP, K5JPP



**MINUTES**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club**  
December 4, 2021 9:00 AM  
Via Videoconference

Members Present:

Mike Hardwick N5VCX  
(President)  
Jimmy Vance NA5D  
(Vice President)  
Rick Hiller W5RH  
(2 yr at large director)

David Ely N5EKW  
(Treasurer)  
Jeff Greer W5JEF  
(Cor. Secretary)  
Scott Medbury KD5FBA  
(2 yr at large director)

Michael Monsour AC0TX  
(Quartermaster)  
K5HM, K5MGJ, KG5BBF,  
K5BOU, WA5LEE, KI5SRR,  
W5LIC

Recorded by Mark McGrath N5VCM Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order: The President called the meeting to order at 9:11 AM.
2. Establishment of a Quorum: A business quorum of Board Members was established.
3. Club President's Opening Statement: The President thanked those in attendance for taking the time to join the meeting.
4. Approval of Agenda: Agenda approved:
5. Emergency business: Clean out warehouse before year end.
6. Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved as submitted.
7. Approval of Treasurer's Report: Approved as presented.
8. Corresponding Secretary: Checked mailbox.
9. Old Business:
  - New repeater and repeater fund.
  - Upcoming general membership meetings - December - Home brew; January - QRP
  - January Banquet cancelled.
  - Possible future field trips.
10. New Business:
  - Greater Houston Hamfest 2022. No consensus was reached on the approach to this event. The President asked for input from individuals on this matter.
11. Next BoD Meeting Date: January 8, 2022
12. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned 10:40 AM





## December VE - FCC TESTING SESSIONS RESULTS

Bayland Community Center is open, they are currently back to 100% capacity, so no headcount limits.  
For Saturday, December 4th, we had 8 candidates and conducted 11 tests.

### New Licensees:

S. Figaro (Technician)  
J. Chema (Technician)  
J. Ramsey (Technician)  
S. Fletcher (Technician)  
R. Earl (Technician)  
C. Travioli (Technician)

### Upgrades:

KI5SSL (General)  
N8YOG (Extra)

Congratulations to all!

A GREAT, thank you to the VEs in attendance – K5GOL, K5LJ, and K5IZO!

The next BVARC test session (at the time of the newsletter printing) is **TBD**, check with K5MGJ for the date. **The testing fee is still \$15.** The date which this will change to \$15 test and \$35 license fee (totaling \$50), has not yet been determined, but is expected sometime early in 2022. Our current understanding is that VEs will collect \$15 at the test session and the \$35 fee will be collected directly by the FCC.

Examination sessions are held each month, usually on the same day as the Saturday BVARC Board meeting. These sessions are at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St., Houston TX 77074  
Details for candidates are found at [www.bvarc.org/home/amateur-license/](http://www.bvarc.org/home/amateur-license/)

Call/Text Mark Janzer, K5MGJ at (832) 875-0526 or eMail: ([k5mgj@yahoo.com](mailto:k5mgj@yahoo.com)) to pre-register.



## 2022 Officers:

President (2022-2023)  
Michael Hardwick, N5VCX  
[n5vcx@att.net](mailto:n5vcx@att.net)

Vice President (2021-2022)  
Jimmy Vance, NA5D

Recording Secretary (2022-20213)  
Mark McGrath -- N5VCM  
[mark@mcgrath-co.com](mailto:mark@mcgrath-co.com)

Corresponding Secretary (2021-2022)  
Jeff Greer, W5JEF  
[greerjw@hotmail.com](mailto:greerjw@hotmail.com)

Treasurer (2021-2022)  
David Ely, N5EKW  
[Davidely@prodigy.net](mailto:Davidely@prodigy.net)

2 Year At-Large Board Member A: (2022-2023)  
Anthony Morones, W5LIC

2 Year At-Large Board Member B: (2021-2022)  
Scott Medbury KD5FBA  
[smedbury@windstream.net](mailto:smedbury@windstream.net)

1 Year At Large (2022)  
Sheree Horton, WM5N  
[sher5456@gmail.com](mailto:sher5456@gmail.com)

### Regularly Scheduled Club Happenings:

#### General Meeting

Second Thursday each month, 7:30 PM  
Imperial Park Sugarland Recreation Center at  
234 Matlage Way, Sugar Land TX, 77478  
Due to COVID-19, as this goes to press, the meeting will be held  
online at 7PM. Check [www.BVARC.org](http://www.BVARC.org) for more current info.

#### Board of Directors Meeting

The Saturday before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 9:00 AM  
Bayland Park Community Center  
Bayland Park, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston.  
Due to COVID-19, as this goes to press, the meeting will be held  
online. Check [www.BVARC.org](http://www.BVARC.org) for more current info.

#### Volunteer Examiner Program

The monthly ham testing session takes place on the same day and  
location as the BOD Meeting, but at 10:30 AM. However, please  
check the BVARC website for any last minute changes or updates.  
The meeting location is open, however please check the  
[www.BVARC.org](http://www.BVARC.org) for updates.

#### Rag Chew Net

3910 KHz +/-3KHz Wednesdays  
at 7:00 p.m.

#### Public Service Net

Monday night on 146.94 (167.9) at 8:00 PM

SPECIAL NETS during these COVID-19 times:

A breakfast net is held on Saturday mornings and a "Stir Crazy" net  
is held each weekday at noon. Check [www.BVARC.org](http://www.BVARC.org) for current  
info.

There is also a Simplex Net on 2M, however, this info is not available  
to the Editor at press time. Once provided, it will be put in the next  
edition of the BEACON.



### **Advertising in the BVARC Newsletter**

Rates are as follows; \$25 per monthly for ½ page, \$125 for six months  
and \$250 for one year. The rates for a full page are as follows; \$50 per  
month, \$250 for six months and \$500 for the year.



### **BVARC EATING SCHEDULE**

**Most of these events have resumed while complying to  
the Social Distancing and Mask requirements. Check  
with the respective entity to see the actual status.**

#### SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

IHOP, 7:00a.m., SW Freeway inbound service road,  
near Kirkwood.

#### OTHER HAM GROUPS:

##### WEDNESDAY LUNCH BUNCH

This group has resumed meeting weekly at Luby's  
Cafeteria, W. Airport & FM-1092 (Murphy Rd). 11AM.

##### WEDNESDAYS – AMSAT & QRP GROUP

This too is not available at press time. If anyone has  
information on this, please let the Editor know.



### **Hamfests**

(typically within 200 miles of Houston)

#### **02/26/2022 - Orange Hamfest 2022**

**Location:** Orange, TX

**Type:** ARRL Hamfest

**Sponsor:** Orange ARC, Jefferson County ARC and Beaumont  
ARC

**Website:** [https://www.gsl.net/w5nd/index\\_files/HAMFEST%20NFO/hamfest%20info](https://www.gsl.net/w5nd/index_files/HAMFEST%20NFO/hamfest%20info).

#### **03/04/2022 – 03/04/2022**

#### **Greater Houston Hamfest**

**Cancelled See Swapmeet below**

#### **04/16/2022**

#### **Greater Houston Tailgate or the GHT.**

**Location:** Duhacsek Park

**Sponsor:** Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

**Website:** [www.bvarc.org](http://www.bvarc.org)

7 am to 3 pm.

#### **06/17/2022 - 06/18/2022**

#### **Radio Fiesta**

**Location:** Schertz, TX

**Type:** ARRL Hamfest

**Sponsor:** San Antonio Radio Club

**Website:** <https://w5sc.org/>

# BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

This newsletter, the BVARC BEACON, is a monthly publication of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club. For a full listing of officers and information about BVARC, please go to [www.bvarc.org](http://www.bvarc.org). Detailed information will be published in the BEACON every 3 or 4 months. Similarly, the "Eating Schedule" will be published every 3 or 4 months unless there is a change.

General membership dues are \$25.00 per year, with student dues \$10.00 per year, additional family members \$5.00 per member per year.

Club meetings are temporarily virtual via ZOOM on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. If you have signed up for the reflector, you will receive notice and the attendance password, etc. It will also be on the website (above) a few days beforehand.

**BVARC** amateur radio testing has resumed. It takes place typically on the Saturday before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 10:30 AM. Location: Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, 77074. BEFORE GOING, because of COVID and scheduling conflicts, please check the BVARC website for any changes. Masks and social distancing are required.

A Public Service Net is held each Monday at 8 p.m. on the 146.94 (minus offset, PL 167.9 tone) repeater.

During COVID-19 a "Stir Crazy Net" is also held weekdays at 12 Noon on the same frequency as above.

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, see the BVARC website: [www.bvarc.org](http://www.bvarc.org)

Other contacts include:

President:, Mike Hardwick, N5VCX, [n5vcx@att.net](mailto:n5vcx@att.net)

Newsletter Editor, John Chauvin, K5IZO, [k5izo@yahoo.com](mailto:k5izo@yahoo.com)

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Jeff Greer, W5JEF, [greerjw@hotmail.com](mailto:greerjw@hotmail.com), Mark Brantana, N5PRD, [N5PRD@yahoo.com](mailto:N5PRD@yahoo.com)

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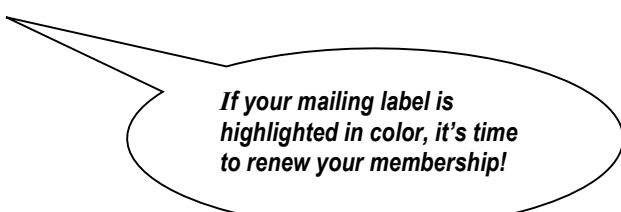
January 2022

**BRAZOS VALLEY  
AMATEUR RADIO CLUB  
P.O. BOX 2997  
SUGAR LAND, TX 77487-2997  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

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January 13, 2022 – General Membership Meeting



*If your mailing label is  
highlighted in color, it's time  
to renew your membership!*