BVARC BEACON

Newsletter of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

VOLUME 50 ISSUE 10 **OCTOBER 2026**

General Membership Meeting – Thursday October 8 at 7:30 PM

Community Volunteer Fire Department Community Center, 16005 Bellaire Blvd, Houston TX 77083

November BVARC Elections

Soliciting Candidates

The BVARC elections are just around the corner. We still need candidates for the following Board of Directors positions that are coming open December 31st, 2026, for 2027/2028 terms of office:

Vice President - 2027 thru 2028 term

Recording Secretary – 2027 thru 2028 term

Corresponding Secretary – 2027 thru 2028 term (was not listed last month)

2 Year at Large (B) – 2027 thru 2028 term

1 Year at Large – 2027 term

Should you have an interest in running for any of these positions or you have questions as to what is involved, please contact Mike Hardwick, N5VCX at n5vcx@att.net or Chuck Hale, W5WO, at tooloud61@gmail.com.

Club members constantly talk about the club not growing or there are not enough activities. To make growth happen and for activities to be organized, the club needs your help to keep the club running and support for amateur radio. Without the support of its members to run the club, the club will not survive. BVARC is coming on its 50th anniversary and we need your support to make it continue for another 50 years!

Ham Exam Question

What hazard is created by operating at microwave frequencies?

A. Microwaves are ionizing radiation

B. The high gain antennas commonly used can result in high exposure levels

C. Microwaves are in the frequency range where wave velocity is higher

D. The extremely high frequency energy can damage the joints of antenna structures

October 2026 – Amateur Radio Events Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
R: Rag Chew Net 3910 kHz 7 PM Wed **S:** Stir Crazy Net Noon Mon-Fri	**T:** 10-10 Net 8 PM Tue **B:** IHOP Breakfast 6:30 AM Sat	**P:** Public Service Net 8 PM Mon	Reminder: nets have moved to 146.88 PL167.9	1 **S**	2 **S** Belton Hamfest	3 **B** VE Testing 10:30AM Belton Hamfest
4 BVARC Board Mtg 6 PM Zoom	5 **P S**	6 **S T O** Brews w/ BVARC	7 **R S**	8 **S** BVARC Meeting 7:30 PM	9 **S**	10 **B**
11	12 **P S**	13 **S T O**	14 **R S**	15 **S**	16 **S**	17 **B**
18	19 **P S**	20 **S T O**	21 **R S**	22 **S**	23 **S**	24 **B**
25	26 **P S**	27 **S T O**	28 **R S**	29 **S**	30 **S**	31 **B**
1	2 **P S**	3 **S T O**	4 **R S**	5 **S**	6 **S**	7 **B** VE Testing 10:30AM
8 BVARC Board Meeting TBA	9 **P S**	10 **S T O**	11 **R S**	12 **S** BVARC Meeting 7:30 PM	13 **S** Crossroads Hamfest	14 **B** Crossroads Hamfest

10/2-3/2026 Belton HamExpo, https://tarc.org/hamexpo-schedule/.

10/6/2026 Brews with BVARC, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm, Project Halo Brewing, 6510 FM 359 Suite 300, Fulshear TX 77441

10/10/2026 The Woodlands 10 for Texas. https://www.woodlands-event-comms.info/events/10-for-texas.

10/16-18/2026 Boy Scouts of America Jamboree on the Air, https://www.scouting.org/international/jota-joti/jota/

11/13-14/2026 Crossroads Hamfest, Columbus Club Hall, 1458 County Rd 406, El Campo TX 77437

3/5-6/2027 Greater Houston Hamfest, ARRL Texas State Convention, Ft Bend County Fairgrounds, Rosenberg TX 77471

Waves & Coffee –
The Skin Effect
What is 'skin depth' all about?
By Stephen W2WF

Consider three seemingly unrelated scenarios.

Now a days, we can go to Amazon.com and order a "Faraday cage envelope" to place our cell phones inside. The Faraday cage envelope keeps the E&M waves from going out, or coming into, the item that we have inside. This is usually done for privacy reasons and works well. But *why* does this work?

Similarly, when we watch some reputable YouTube videos, we see that in a copper wire that carries current, the current density tends to concentrate on the surface, or skin, of the conductor. If that is indeed what happens, why does it happen?

Lastly, we've all watched movies or read books in which submarines go to shallow depths to communicate with headquarters using something called 'VLF' or 'Very Low Frequency' radio waves. Why don't they use HF, VHF, UHF, or even microwaves to communicate below the water? And if they indeed come up to a shallow depth for comms, why do they do that?

Are these three different phenomena related?

The short answer is yes, it turns out that these are examples of a physical phenomenon called 'The Skin Effect'. The name itself is descriptive in that it refers to the current density of a conductor tending to concentrate on the surface of the conductors; furthermore, the skin effect has a dependence on the frequency of the E&M wave being considered.

Since we're dealing with E&M waves, let's begin with Maxwel's equations and see if we can come up with an expression for 'skin depth' which depends on our wave's frequency. As before, we'll go step by step and simplify the concepts down to the essential physics.

If you'd like to continue to follow Alice down the rabbit hole, grab a cup of coffee or tea and join me by accessing the full article at: https://bvarc.org/home/tech-downloads/

Updates on 146.880 MHz Repeater

As most of you know by now, several of the BVARC NETs have shifted over to the **Houston Radio Repeater Club's** 146.880 MHz repeater. By shifting over to the '88' repeater, the coverage area has increased by about 30% since the antennas are 700 feet higher. Along with the bigger coverage area, there are now several other additions. They are:

1. Five linked repeaters
    a. 29.640 MHz (29.540 input, no tone)
    b. 147.360 MHz (147.960 input, 103.5 tone)
    c. 224.800 MHz (223.200 input, 103.5 tone)
    d. 442.000 MHz (447.000 input, 103.5 tone)
    e. 444.150 MHz (449.150 input, 103.5 tone)
2. ECHO Link
    a. Under WB5TUF-R

These additions will enhance the coverage around greater Houston, allowing better access to the NETS.

And if you would like to just talk local, the 146.940 repeater is still there!

So, jump on one of the various repeaters or ECHO Link for one of the next BVARC NETS!

73,

Mike Hardwick, N5VCX

Trustee

Houston Radio Repeater Club

146.880	146.940	147.340	146.720
443.825	444.600	444.600	444.950 DMR

The Greater Houston HamFest
Presents
The ARRL Texas State Convention

Note Date Change for 2027 - 3-5 & 3-6

Tickets:

On-line - $10
At the Door - $15
Children 12 and under
Scouts, Military,
& First Responders
In Uniform - FREE
Tables - $25
Tailgate - $5

When

Friday March 5th, 2027
12 PM to 6 PM
Saturday March 6th, 2027
8AM to 3PM

Door Prizes Every half hour starting at 9:00 am!!

Where:

Fort Bend County Fairgrounds
4310 TX- 36 S, Rosenberg, TX 77471
29°31'12" N 95°48'38" W

Sponsors/Vendors

* Ham Radio Outlet
* The SignMan of Baton Rouge
* ABR Industries
* EPO

Raffle Prizes

Single Ticket - $5
Five Tickets - $20

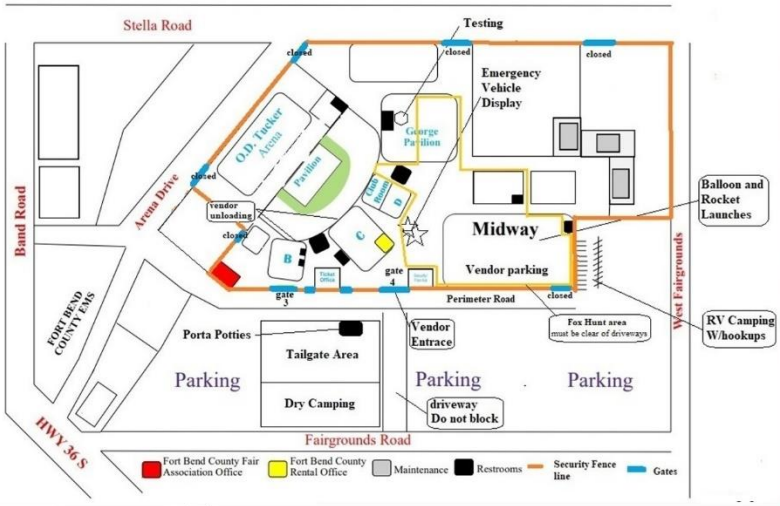
Grand Prize

Prize info coming soon!

Guest Speaker

John Stratton, N5US
ARRL West Gulf Division Director

Radio Programming Classes
Testing & Balloon Launches
Overnight camping available
Free Shuttles to your car



Contact:

Chairman: Mike Hardwick, N5VCX
713-826-6917

FB.com/groups/HoustonHamfest
Twitter.com/HoustonHamfest

www.HoustonHamfest.org www.HoustonHamfest.org

September 2026 VE - FCC TESTING SESSION RESULTS

For the September 5th test session, at Bayland Park - we had 7 candidates and conducted 14 tests

New Licensees:

Jayarathna, S. (Technician) KJ5RQL
Flores, T. (Technician) KJ5RQP
Blackburn, H. (Technician) KJ5RRM
Ames, W. (General)
Manani, P. (Extra) AJ5CX

Upgrades:

Coffman, M. (General) KJ5EVP
Higgs, D. (General) KF5WZI

VEs in attendance – K5GOL, K5LJ, W5WO, W5ICR, WM5N and KG4NDS – **THANKS!**

Congratulations to All!

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The next BVARC test sessions will be at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St., Houston TX 77074, on **Saturday October 3rd,** starting at 10:30 am.

Pre-registration is required (BVARC VE Team).

https://hamstudy.org/sessions/arrl/77008/inperson

For new licensees the testing fee, paid at the session is $15. An additional $35 license fee (totaling $50), will be collected by the FCC separately for new, renewal and vanity calls. License upgrades **do not** pay the added $35 fee, just the $15 session fee.

YOUTH LICENSING INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The ARRL has created a youth program (18 and under) to defray the licensing costs to a total of **$5** (deducting the $35 increase and $10 off the $15 VE session fee). See: http://www.arrl.org/youth-licensing-grant-program

Also, BVARC is implementing its own program for **youth** licensing. We'll provide a **new VHF/UHF transceiver (Baofeng, limited supply)** at the VE session, to youth that successfully pass their Technician test. The HTs are a very generous donation (Dec. '23) from a BVARC member, THANKS!

Bottom line, a young person for $5, can walk into a test session and walk out with a new radio and a pending license.

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Examination sessions are held each month, most times the first weekend of the month and usually on the same weekend as the Sunday BVARC Board meeting. These testing sessions are at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St., Houston TX 77074

Details for candidates are found at https://bvarc.org/home/ham-radio-license-testing-houston/
Pre-register to attend a test session at: https://hamstudy.org/sessions/arrl/77008/inperson
Become a VE! https://www.arrl.org/become-an-arrl-ve
For questions, Email Mark Janzer, K5MGJ at (k5mgj@yahoo.com).

Advertising in the
BVARC BEACON
Business card sized ads are $10 per month or six months for $50.
Half page ads are $25 per month, $125 for six months, or $250 per year.
Full page ads are $50 per month, $250 for six months, or $500 per year.

BVARC EATS

Saturday Breakfast 6:30 AM, IHOP, 12725 Southwest Fwy, Stafford TX 77477

Wednesday Lunch Bunch 11 AM to Noon, Luby's Cafeteria, 10575 W Airport Blvd, Stafford TX 77477

Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club
Minutes

September 6, 2026 @ 18:00
Online Zoom video meeting

Board Members

President – Richard Bonica – KG5YCU	Vice President – Kori Rahman – WX5KR
Treasurer – John Brockus – NE5EA	1 Year At-Large (Past Prez) – Mike Hardwick – N5VCX
2 Year At-Large – Lee Glassman – WA5LEE	2 Year At-Large – Kirc Breden – N5XJB
Corresponding Secretary – Eddie Runner – NU5K	Recording Secretary – Blake Alley – N5BAA

Board of Directors Meeting

- Called Meeting to Order: 18:08
- Quorum: established.
- Opening Statement: none given.
- Agenda Review: approved.
- Treasurer's Report: accepted.
- Corresponding Secretary's Report: received.
- Recording Secretary's Report: Previous three meetings minutes to be approved at next meeting.
- Old Business: none given.
- Programs: Chris (EPO) weekday, TDXS Texas QSO party
- Committees
  - Election: Chuck W5WO
  - Newsletter: Donovan
  - Historical Archives: Eddie NU5K – archives in BVARC Admin.
  - By-Laws: Terry K5PGF and John K5IZO
  - Finance: John NE5EA, Eddie NU5K, Kori WX5KR
  - Events: Eddie NU5K publishing to website
  - Membership/retention: Eddie NU5K
  - Food Team: Chuck W5WO, Kirc N5XJB, and Richard KG5YCU to re-establish team for general meetings.
  - Elmer/ Subject Matter Experts
    - Background process: elmer interests to be integrated in roster.
  - Museum Ships Wknd – Mark Janzer
  - Field Day – Richard KG5YCU, Allen Brier N5XZ
  - Greater Houston Hamfest – Mike N5VCX
    - Management team to be established for future hamfests.
  - Banquet: Kori WX5KR
  - Web committee: Eddie (lead), Kori, Blake, and Lee.
  - Net controllers: Chuck N5CHB
    - Sign-up sheets to be published on website.

- Net control reminders to be sent.
- Scripts online to be *verified* (for suggestion only).

❖ New Business:

- ➢ Blake to send existing KK5W albums in nominal resolution/compression. Eddie to upload to web.
- ➢ Create open-contribution photo albums for events for all members to submit photos. Discuss who would manage.
- ➢ 3 Goals of BVARC:
  - Membership
  - Events/meetings
  - On-the-air; encourage membership

❖ Next meeting: October 4, 2026, 18:00, online Zoom video meeting

- ➢ Email reminders to be standardized to 1 week before, 1 day before, and day of event.

❖ Meeting adjourned: 20:11

Recorded by Blake Alley, N5BAA

What Your Family Will Find in Your Shack

Sooner or later somebody who is not a ham is going to walk into your station and have to decide what to do with it.

That person will probably be your wife, or a son or daughter who never caught the bug. They will look at a wall of black boxes with knobs on them. They will not know which one cost three hundred dollars and which one cost four thousand. They will not know that the ugly grey box in the corner is worth more than everything above it. They will not know whether the tower in the yard is an asset or a liability.

So they will do what anyone would do. They will ask a neighbor, or take the first offer that comes along, or call somebody who advertises that he hauls away estates. And a station that took you forty years to assemble will leave the house in an afternoon for a fraction of what it was worth.

I have been licensed since 1963 and I have watched this happen more than once. The frustrating part is that it is almost entirely preventable, and preventing it does not cost anything. It costs one afternoon, and it has to be you who spends it, because you are the only person alive who knows what is in that room.

Here is how to do it.

Start With the List, Not the Values

Open a spreadsheet, or take a legal pad if you would rather. For every piece of equipment, write down four things: manufacturer, model, serial number, and a one-line note on condition and what is wrong with it.

That last part matters more than people expect. "Works, but the display is dim" and "needs finals" and "never been opened" are three completely different items at the same model number. If you

know the radio has a fault, write the fault down. You are not selling anything here. You are telling the truth to somebody who will not be able to find it out for themselves.

Do the obvious things first - the transceivers, the amplifiers, the tuners - then go back through and catch what you walked past. Power supplies. Antenna switches. Rotators and their controllers. Keys and paddles. Microphones, and headsets. Test equipment, which is frequently the most valuable thing in the room and the least likely to be recognized as such. A good spectrum analyzer or a calibrated signal generator will outvalue most of your radios, and to an untrained eye it looks like scrap.

Then go out to the yard. Towers, antennas, feedline runs, guy anchors, rotator up on the mast. Write down what is up there and roughly when it went up.

Photograph Everything

Take pictures with your telephone. You do not need to be a photographer.

Take one wide shot of the operating position so someone can see how the station fits together. Then, for each significant item: one picture of the front, one of the rear panel, and one close enough to read the model and serial plate. If the serial number is legible in a photograph, nobody has to trust that you copied it correctly.

Photograph the tower base and the antennas from the ground. Photograph the inside of anything you have modified, and write down what you did.

Keep the pictures somewhere other than the phone. A cheap flash drive in the desk drawer is fine.

Now Put Numbers on It

This is the step people dread, and it is easier than it looks, because you are not trying to be exact. You are trying to keep your family from being off by a factor of ten.

Look at what equipment like yours has actually sold for recently - not what it is listed for, which is a different number. The completed-sales archives on the auction sites, the classified boards the rest of us read anyway, and the back pages of this newsletter will all tell you what real radios traded for this year. Write the number down, write the date next to it, and note where you got it.

Be honest about the difference between what a thing is worth and what it would cost to replace. A twenty-year-old transceiver in good order may be worth six hundred dollars on the used market and cost three thousand to replace new. Both numbers are true and they answer different questions. For estate purposes, what matters is what it would actually fetch.

Three things deserve particular care. Vintage and collector gear - the Collins, the Drake, the good boat anchors - swings wildly on condition and originality, and an unrestored original can be worth more than a beautifully refinished one. Homebrew equipment generally has no market value regardless of how good it is, and you should say so plainly rather than leave your family hoping. And parts, tubes and junk boxes are worth something in bulk to the right buyer and nothing at all to the wrong one.

Write the Part No Spreadsheet Holds

Add a page in plain English, addressed to whoever opens the file. Tell them which items are worth real money and which are not. Tell them what should not be sold - the key your father gave you, whatever it is - and to whom it should go. Tell them if the tower needs a professional to come down, because that is a cost, not an asset. Name two or three people in the club who would give them an honest opinion, and say why you trust them.

Then tell somebody the file exists and where it is. An inventory nobody can find is the same as no inventory.

Keep It Breathing

Look at it once a year. Field Day weekend, the first snow, your license anniversary - the date does not matter, the habit does. Ten minutes to add what came in and strike what went out.

Do not leave this for somebody else to work out from the outside. They cannot. You can, and it will take you one afternoon.

By Robert B. Davidheiser, Sr., W5RBD

Your Club Needs Your Voice!

BVARC is looking for Net Control Operators! Running a net is one of the best ways to sharpen your "radio muscles" and give back to the hobby. We are currently seeking volunteers for our **Stir Crazy** (Noon daily), **Monday Public Service**, and **Wednesday Ragchew** nets.

Don't worry if you've never run a net before—we'll provide the scripts and the "elmering" to get you comfortable. Help us keep our frequencies active and our community strong. Contact the Net Team today to sign up for a slot!

If you can not RUN as net, at least please check in.

Ham Exam Answer: B. The high gain antennas commonly used can result in high exposure levels.

Regularly Scheduled Club Happenings

General Meeting Second Thursday each month, 7:30 PM, in-person and Zoom, 16005 Bellaire Blvd

Board of Directors Meeting The weekend before the 2nd Thursday, in-person and/or via Zoom. Check the website as this might change. In person meetings are usually at Bayland Park Community Center.

Volunteer Examiner Program Monthly ham testing session 10:30 AM usually on the Saturday before the General Meeting, at Bayland Park Community Center. Please check the BVARC website for any last-minute changes or updates.

Rag Chew Net 3910 KHz ± 3KHz Wednesdays at 7 PM

Public Service Net Monday night on 146.88- (167.9) at 8 PM

Stir Crazy Net Monday-Friday on 146.88- (167.9) at 12 PM.

2026 Club Officers

President (2026-2027)
Richard Bonica KG5YCU kg5ycu@gmail.com
Vice President (2025-2026)
Kori Rahman WX5KR kori113@gmail.com
Treasurer (2025-2026)
John Brockus NE5EA johnbrockus@gmail.com
Recording Secretary (2026-2027)
Blake Alley N5BAA n5baa@baaelectronics.com
Corresponding Secretary (2025-2026)
Eddie Runner N5UK eddie.runner@yahoo.com
2-Year Director (2025-2026)
Kirc Breden N5XJB n5xjb@yahoo.com
2-Year Director (2026-2027)
Lee Glassman WA5LEE leemanpa@me.com
1-Year Director (2026)
Mike Hardwick N5VCX n5vcx@att.net

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. 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 per year, with student dues $10 per year, additional family members $5 per member per year.

Club meetings are both in-person and via Zoom on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. If you have signed up for the email reflector, you will receive notice and the attendance password, etc. It will also be on the website a few days beforehand.

BVARC amateur radio testing takes place typically on the Saturday before the 2nd Thursday of each month at 10:30 AM. Location: Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, 77074. **Before going** please check the BVARC website for any changes.

A Public Service Net is held each Monday at 8 PM on the 146.94 (minus offset, PL 167.9 tone) repeater.
A "Stir Crazy Net" is also held weekdays at 12 Noon on the 146.94 (minus offset, PL 167.9 tone) repeater.
A rag chew net is held each Wednesday at 7 PM on 3910 kHz +/- 3 kHz.

To obtain information about joining BVARC or its activities, see the BVARC website: www.bvarc.org.

Other contacts:
BVARC President Richard Bonica KG5YCU kg5ycu@gmail.com,
Newsletter Editor Donovan Balli KG5BDZ dballi@mail.com,
Editor Emeritus John Chauvin K5IZO k5izo@yahoo.com.

VOLUME 50 ISSUE 10 **OCTOBER 2026**

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Board of Directors Meeting – 6 PM Sunday, October 4, 2026, via Zoom
General Membership Meeting – 7:30 PM Thursday, October 8, 2026, 16005 Bellaire Blvd, Houston TX 77083

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