

THE B-VARC BULLETIN

Volume 20, issue 5

May, 1997



Note from the Editor –

Looking for some articles! Have you bought a new rig lately? Drop me a note and tell me what you've got, and how you like it. I know many people have picked up new rigs recently, and I want to read all about them. Remember, Hamcom is coming in June!! If you need help, call me and I can give you some ideas. 73, Scott, ki5dr

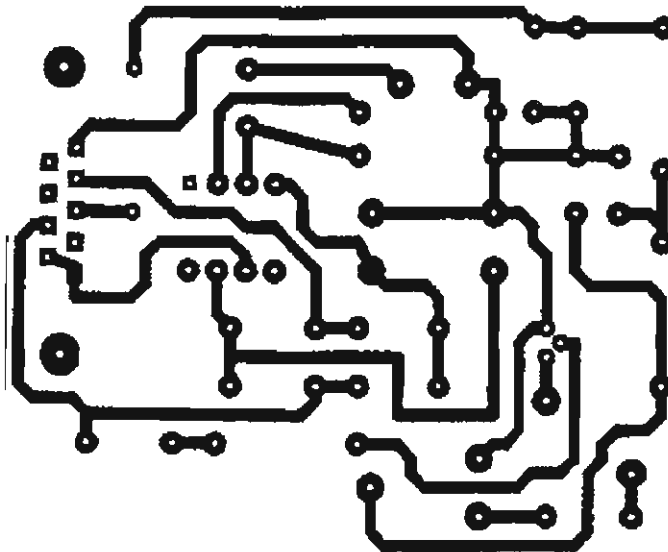
What's in this issue?

- Notes from the Pres P.3
- Meeting minutes P. 4
- Repeater connected to the Internet??? P. 7

Field Day is coming!

Time to brush the dust off those portable antennas, push-up poles, antennas, and rigs for the 1997 annual Field Day Event and Cookout. See the letter from the President or contact Alan N5XZ for details.

A Special Thanks to the First Colony Church of Christ for the use of their facilities which make this newsletter possible.



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President:

Gailen Marshall - N4SKR

Vice-President:

Rick Hiller - W5RH

Recording Secretary:

Terri VanSlyke - W5BKK

Corresponding Secretary:

John Dryton - KC5QZD

Treasurer:

Nizar Mullani - K0NM

3-Year Board Member:

Jackie Burton - KC5OHJ
(713) 460-1968

2-Year Board Member:

Terry McCoy - W5TEM
(713) 641-4595

1-Year Board Member:

Bud King - N5UOG
(713)-494-3741

Past President:

Ron Grimes - WA5SCE
(713) 341-7137

PSN Check-ins for April 1997

By Jackie, KC5OHJ

4/7 - 36

4/14 - 34

4/21 - 43

4/28 - 40

73 de KC5OHJ

IP Address: 44.76.4.118

kc5ohj.ampr.org

Every Meeting a Hamfest



Don't forget!

The monthly meetings are a perfect time to bring your junk box to trade with other hams who bring their Junk Box! Remember, one ham's junk is another ham's Junk!

Public Service Events!

May 18th - Clean Air Challenge

Last chance to sign up for the Clean Air Challenge bike ride. Here's an opportunity to use your radio equipment for a good cause. We still need a few more hams for the event. For more information, please contact Jackie, KC5OHJ at (713) 460-1968.

June 28, 29 Field Day

Help needed for the 1997 Annual B-VARC Field Day / Cookout. For information on what is needed, or to sign up to operate, contact Alan N5XZ.

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President's Message for May 1997

By Gailen Marshall, n4skr

Finally, it is starting to warm up! The trees and grasses are blooming (no that is not advertising) and thoughts are beginning to turn to the outdoors. What an opportunity for hamming! Several dozen members, family and friends attended the spring B-VARC picnic. The wind was so strong that the caterer took the group back to his restaurant to feed them. What a treat! I promise we will have another picnic later this summer or fall. If you would like to help out, just let us know.

Field day is less than two months away. We are again planning to have the event at Katy Park with Alan, N5XZ (ex WB5BIR), heading up the event again. We need lots of volunteers and PARTICIPANTS. So mark your calendars for the last Saturday in June and...get involved!

We hope to have some other participatory events for the group this summer. A swapfest is planned as well as several miniDXpeditions (such as to Sea Wolf Park on Galveston Island). Also we hope to learn some great "hands-on" lessons with such things as foxhunting, emergency management and portable satellite operations. Of course, interest and help by any member is ALWAYS welcomed.

Finally, I have a real burden to begin a mentoring program that matches the more veteran hams with newer hams for the expressed purpose of improving the new ham's understanding and skill in amateur radio. The "Elmer" program has been a strong tradition in amateur radio and many BVARC members have and are already doing this. However, I would like to formalize the process to facilitate this interaction. If you would be willing to serve as an Elmer or want us to help you find one, please let me know. I will prepare a list and hope to have the plan in place by June 1. If there is someone who is interested in coordinating this program, I would like to hear from you, too.

I look forward to great programs, events and fellowship at BVARC this summer. Come join us!

B-VARC Rag-Chew Net Check-Ins *By Sam Wilson, N5CPA*

3.960 MHz +/- 3Khz
Wednesdays at 8:00 PM

03/05/97 N5CPA (NCS), N5UOG, KE5SR, K5LJ, KK5D0, KM5DG, KG5KV, KI5SC, KB5PAJ, W5IHY, WA5TWL,. (11)

03/12/97 N5CPA (NCS), W5EFB, W5GHK, KE5SR, K5LJ, N5ZDF, KB5V, KK5D0, KG5KV, WB8SVR, W5IHY, AK5G. (12)

03/19/97 N5CPA (NCS), KA0SAB/5, W5AUH, KC5KGJ, KG5KV, W5EFB, N5UOG, W5TEM, KI5SC, KB5PAJ,

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K5LJ, W5GHK, W5GBR, W5IHY,
W5BIB, WA5TWL. (16)

03/26/97 N5CPA (NCS), KG5KV,
W5GHK, KE5SR, W5EFB, N5UOG,
AB5OK, KI5SC, KB5PAJ,
N5ECP, KK5DO, K5LJ, WA5TWL,
KI5WU, W5TEM, W5IHY, KC5KGJ,
W5AD, N5NLP, WA5YJW, KR4PJ,
KM5AB, KC5VMJ, N4LHH. (24)



Meeting information for May

By Rick Hiller, W5RH

May meeting programs are as follows:

Technical Corner—SAREX Update—
Bruce KK5DO

Product Corner—R.L. Drake Company

Equipment and History—Rick W5RH

Program—Transmitter fingerprinting—
George N7SNI

Thanks...Rick

Meeting of the Board of Directors of The Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club April 3, 1997

A quorum of the Board of Directors met at Vaso's Restaurant on April 3, 1997. This was the fourth meeting of the calendar year. The meeting was called to order by President, Gailen Marshall -- N4SKR, at 6:30 P.M.

The following Board Members and guests were present: Gailen Marshall -- N4SKR, Terri Van Slyke -- W5BKK, Bud King -- N5UOG, Ron Grimes -- WA5SCE, Charles Prochaska --KG5KV, John Dryton -- KM5HP, Mike Hardwick --N5VCX, Jack Van Demark -- WN5A, and Terry McCoy -- W5TEM.

President, Gailen Marshall -- N4SKR, stated that an audit committee had been formed consisting of Dale Brown -- KC2PZ, Steve Gottleib -- WA5OEN, and Randy Pollard -- AK5G, and that a report would be available at the next board meeting.

The Minutes for the March board meeting were approved with a motion that passed unanimously.

Treasurer, Nizar Mullani -- K0NM, presented a Treasurer's report dated 4/10/97, showing \$ 1,760.00 in CD, \$ 3, 185.06 in checking, and \$ 120.00 and change in petty cash for a total of \$ 5, 065.06 and change. The Treasurer's

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report was approved with a motion that passed unanimously.

Corresponding Secretary, John Dryton -- KM5HP, stated that he is keeping the membership roster current and has 40 membership applications.

President, Gailen Marshall -- N4SKR, said that Allen Mattis -- N5AFV, had asked for a report of the results of his membership drive. Corresponding Secretary, John Dryton -- KM5HP, stated that he had received a positive response from one member, and would get a report together for Allen.

Recording Secretary, Terri Van Slyke -- W5BKK, reported that 13 meals had been sold for the upcoming picnic.

Mike Hardwick -- N5VCX, gave a Public Service report. He stated that the upcoming MS 150 still needed volunteers. He reported that Jackie Burton -- KC5OHJ, was coordinating the radio portion of the Clean Air Challenge.

President, Gailen Marshall -- N4SKR, stated that he needed an update on Field Day plans from Allen Brier -- WB5BIR. He also was waiting for information regarding B-VARC logo items. He said that insurance papers were needed to reserve the pavilion for Field Day. Jack Van Demark -- WN5A, said that ARRL had the insurance papers and would fax them to Harris County. Concern was expressed regarding interference by the "squirrel" on the repeater.

Mike Hardwick -- N5VCX expressed concern regarding the current direction of club meetings. He said that he felt like meetings were not club oriented and didn't feel that the Board meetings on the air had been successful. Discussion followed regarding club meeting structure and pros and cons of Board meetings on the air.

Past President, Ron Grimes -- WA5SCE, Treasurer, Nizar Mullani -- K0NM, and Board Member, Terry McCoy -- W5TEM, all stated that they liked the Board meetings on the air.

President, Gailen Marshall -- N4SKR, said that he would continue in the same direction regarding club meetings and felt that Board meetings on the air had been successful with the exception of a few problems. He added that meeting attendance had been good. He stated the need to determine the opinion of the club membership regarding these issues.

Treasurer, Nizar Mullani -- K0NM, said the he felt we needed to examine these issues and determine if we are losing the "club" feeling. He stated that we need a strong program for enhancing B-VARC and a Social/Public Relations person.

Board Member, Bud King -- N5UOG, stated that he didn't like the Board meetings on the air. He offered his home for the next Board meeting. He also stated that he wanted a more specific amount in the Treasurer's report.

Mike Hardwick -- N5VCX, suggested using a bulletin board for club announcements and events. John Dryton

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-- KM5HP, was appointed to chair a committee to create this bulletin board.

President, Gailen Marshall -- N4SKR, reported that some problems exist in the current newsletter format and he would discuss these with Newsletter Editor, Scott Pederson -- KI5DR.

Mike Hardwick -- N5VCX, reported that the Houston Amateur Radio Club had been disbanded and that the charter could be reactivated. He suggested doing this and making the club a central control point of information for Houston and surrounding areas. He stated that there has been interest from other clubs and volunteered to be a member of a committee formed to research this idea.

With no further business, this meeting was adjourned by President, Gailen Marshall -- N4SKR, at 7:15 P.M. with a motion, second and unanimous vote.

Morse Code to the Rescue

The following post was included in this week's Maritime News on misc.transport.marine.

As a little background:

The US Coastguard discontinued Morse watchkeeping on Aug. 1, 1993
The Morse Distress Watch will be discontinued on a worldwide basis on December 31 this year. This has been in use since 1912.

misc.transport.marine

Russian-registry ship uses Morse Code after becoming disabled off the Netherlands

The Vera (Russian-registry 1,750-dwt dry cargo ship) was disabled recently when a bridge window broke during bad weather. Water that entered through the hole shut down electrical equipment on the bridge, and the ship drifted towards Terschelling Island, the Netherlands. The only communication equipment working was a 500 KHz broadcasting unit, which the crew used to send a CW (Morse Code) distress signal. a station in Ostend, Belgium, received the signal and the ship was assisted by tugs.

--

Harry Dodsworth Ottawa Ontario
Canada af877@freenet.carleton.ca

Public Service Corner

By Scott Pederson, ki5dr

Well, the Spring Public Service season is winding to a close. After the Clean Air Challenge things will most likely be quiet for the hot summer months, only to return once again this fall.

Just one final word of thanks to everyone who pitched in and helped out this year so far. As it stands, B-VARC (and other clubs) have donated almost 5,000 man-hours of volunteer time this year so far, starting with the Marathon. If we were paid \$25 per hour as communication consultants, we would have donated over \$119,000! This does

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not include the recruiting, meetings, coordination and setup of these events.

So what's in store? B-VARC is currently investigating the possibility of pooling resources with other Houston ham clubs to -

- Get more involvement for individual events
- Spread the workload a little more evenly
- Give the public a more professional image of Amateurs
- Get practice coordinating with other clubs in the event of a REAL disaster.

Some of this may not happen, or all of these items plus some other benefits we never dreamed of may result. The problem lies in the recent drop in participation from club members. B-VARC is not alone in this, as other Houston ham clubs are experiencing the same drop off rates.

So what do we do? Do we decline to offer some of the organizations free communications support? How do we kick some of the inactive members into gear to step up and volunteer? Should we? Could we pool resources with other clubs, and get the job done without dabbling in the politics of the different clubs?

Personally, I am against begging and pleading our club members to come out and participate in these events. If they do not wish to help, there's nothing I can say that will convince them otherwise. Unfortunately the most effective approach has been to continually call B-

VARC members on the telephone and ask them to participate.

This is why I feel our best chance of keeping the number of volunteers available for these events is to pool resources from other ham clubs. So far this has had some WONDEROUS side effects. For example, B-VARC has been invited to participate in a FoxHunt with the Compaq ham club this summer. In addition, we've already seen some increased participation from the NARS group, as well as the ECHO club in events which were historically staffed by B-VARC members. In fact, the Walk For Arthritis last weekend had more hams from NARS than B-VARC!

The bottom line is - we are seeing less participation in PS Events from hams in general, yet the need for hams is increasing every year. The events we coordinate are getting larger, and new events are springing up everywhere. The need is here NOW. It's time to act.

73! Scott...ki5dr

Repeater connected to the Internet?

By Scott Pederson, ki5dr

While driving to work the other morning I had quite a conversation with a fellow ham named Jack from Australia. No, I am not running HF in the car (yet). This was on my 2 meter HT, and the bands were not open. How did I do it?

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Walter Holmes, K5WH has devised an ingenious little setup using Internet Phone software on his PC and a connection to a radio with VOX capabilities. When someone calls his number on the Internet, they have the ability to converse on the 146.760 repeater, located at the Compaq campus on FM249 and Louetta.

How does it work? Quite simple - the audio output from the sound card on his PC is connected to the audio input of his radio. The radio is equipped with a VOX circuit to automatically key the radio when the person speaks on the I-Phone connection. Conversely, the audio coming out of the radio is fed into

the microphone input of the sound card, and the software does the rest.

This has resulted in some amazing conversations on 2 meters from hams around the world who check in regularly. Without too much difficulty, a repeater in another city could be connected the same way, and a link be established between repeaters in two different cities!

Too bad they do not count for Field Day!

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The Monthly Publication of the
Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club.
Serving the Greater Houston Area.
Club Callsign - KC5OIG

B-VARC's Website: <http://www.hal-pc.org/~bvarc>

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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 Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL) has recognized the Commitment to service 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 in the 145.470, and 444.550 MHz repeaters.

To obtain information about the club, its activities, or about joining B-VARC, contact Scott Pederson, KI5DR, at (713) 460-5852.

B-VARC Meeting Schedule

Thursday, May 1st Board of Dir. Meeting BMOTA
7:30 p.m. MERA Repeater 145.470
Open to all B-VARC Members
Thursday, May 8th B-VARC Meeting
7:30 p.m. Sugarland Community Center

B-VARC Eating Schedule

Saturdays-7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Location: New York
Coffee Shop, 9720 Hillcroft @ S. Braeswood
3rd Friday dinners - 6:30 p.m. SHARP! Location TBA
Last Sunday Lunches - 2:30 p.m. Location TBA

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May, 1997

BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO
CLUB
P.O. BOX 1630
MISSOURI CITY TX 77459-1630
address correction requested

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE