

# THE B-VARC BULLETIN

Volume 20, issue 7

July, 1997



<http://www.hal-pc.org/~bvarc>

## Morse Code - Dynamo or Dinosaur?

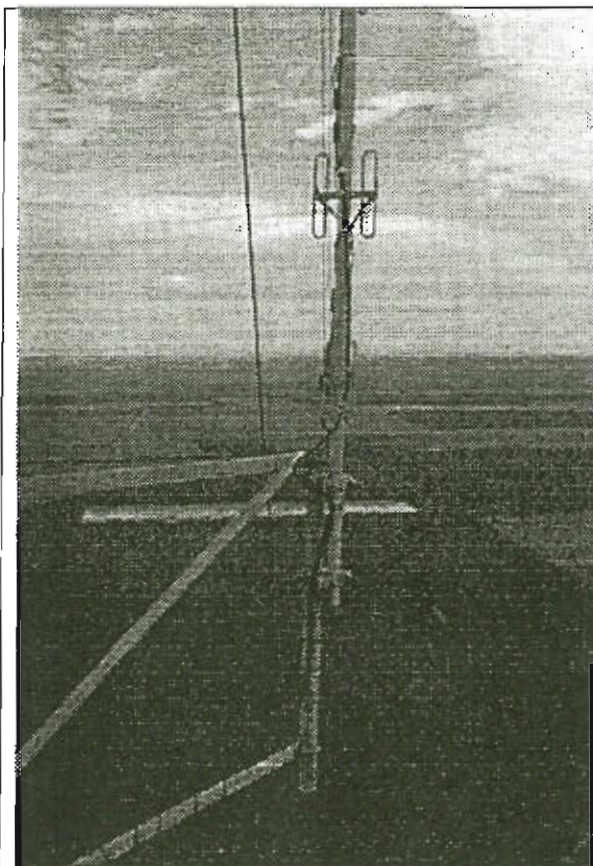
Come by the July monthly meeting for a lively debate on this hot topic!

### What's in this issue?

- Ten Ten News, P. 5
- President's Message P. 3

**Ice Cream Social!!! July 10**  
**Sugar Land Community**  
**Center 7:30 PM**

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



Wouldn't you just LOVE to have a 2,000 ft. tower in your backyard???

Photo of repeater antenna side mounted on 2,000 ft. tower in East Texas  
(Photo Courtesy of Dave Hammer, W3DH)

# THE B-VARC BULLETIN

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## PSN Check-ins for June 1997

*By Jackie, KC5OHJ*

Here are the PSN check-ins for June 1997:

6/2 - 41  
6/9 - 31  
6/16 - 31  
6/23 - 42  
6/30 - 29



## 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!

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### Public Service Events!

None this month...Stay tuned for the Katy Flatlands ride, and the Alamo Challenge!

Also, we've given the go ahead once again to participate in the 20K Marathon warm-up. Stay tuned for further details.

### Technical Corner

- July--Shack Grounding

### Product Corner

- July--10/10 Activities
- Allen N5AFV

### Program

- The GREAT CW Debate  
"Dynamo or Dinosaur"?? Come listen to a debate in classic old

# THE B-VARC BULLETIN

English style. The topic? Something near and dear to almost every ham's heart - Morse Code. Is it still the mode of choice, or should we scrap it for more efficient and effective modes?

Rick, Gailen, and Nizar will entertain us with an in-depth discussion on whether CW is useful or outdated. Unfortunately we could not find any White powdered wigs ☺

- **July—Ice Cream Social/** Book and Junk Swap Meet/ Home Brew Display—Bring your coolest home-brew project, all of your excess ham books and magazines and ham 'junk' and a bit of your favorite ice cream and enjoy the social event of the summer. Spoons and bowls provided. Got a home brew project of which you are proud? Bring it to display and compare notes with other home brewers. Clear those shelves of those never used amateur radio books and magazines and empty out your junk box and bring it all down to swap (no selling allowed) or give away.

*Thanks...Rick*

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**B-VARC RAG CHEW NET CHECK-INS 3.960MHz +/-3KHz**  
**Wednesdays at 8:00PM by Sam Wilson, N5CPA**

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 B-VARC 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 our Rag Chew Hotline announced at the beginning of each net. Here's who you'll hear -

06/04/97 KG5KV (NCS), KI5WU, KJ5SS, NM5K, KI5SC, KB5PAJ, W5GHK, K5LJ, N5VXU, W5IHY, W5RH, N5CPA. (12)

06/11/97 N5CPA (NCS), KJ5SS, W5GBR, N5UOG, KI5SC, KB5PAJ, K5LJ, W5IHY, N5VXU, KK5UO. (10)

06/18/97 N5CPA, N5UOG, W5EFB, KG5KV, KK5W, KA0TEN, KB5PAJ, KI5SC, K5LJ, W5GHK. (10)

06/25/97 N5CPA, W5TEM, W5EFB, KI5SC, KB5PAJ, K5LJ, W5GHK, W5IHY, KC5HNJ. (9)

73 de N5CPA, Sam

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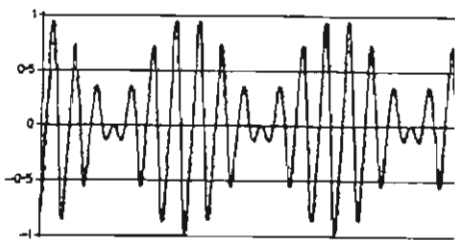
## President's Message for June 1997

Well, fellow hams, the year is officially half gone. It seems like a reasonable time to take stock of what we have done and what we have planned for the future. First, a great big "THANKS" to Ed Manuel N5EM for his super presentation on QRP hamming last month. Because of him, I have dusted off my MFJ 20M rig, dialed down the power to 4 watts and will be working QRP SSB and CW whenever the opportunity presents (which actually is quite often).

# THE B-VARC BULLETIN

Additionally, I popped for the St. Louis vertical that Ed showed at the meeting. What a fantastic portable antenna! How about a "show-and-tell" HF/VHF/UHF program later on this fall?

BVARC has changed this year, no doubt about it. Some of the changes have been good, some perhaps not so good. As you recall, the Board made a collective decision (majority not unanimous) to try to focus the club, particularly during the actual meetings, more on ham-related and a bit less on social-related issues. Some of you have expressed satisfaction with this approach, others have been less than fully satisfied and still others have been dissatisfied. I have attempted to address the concerns expressed to me and have had conversations with several members about the club. Paid membership now exceeds 170 and attendance is generally good at the club meetings. However, I do not want to do things that would cause the club to become fractionated. Many of you who were regular attendees at club meetings in the past are no longer coming to meetings. Why?



I think the quality of the presentations meets or exceeds any speakers that we have had at BVARC since I first joined 8 years ago (thanks, Rick!). The

meeting time and facility has been remarkably stable this year (thanks, Bud!) and we are seeing many new members join (particularly young hams) and even a few old members have come back (thanks, Allen!). My concern lies with the previously regular members who I don't see anymore. I miss you! I would like to hear from you (snail mail, e-mail, phone, carrier pigeon, whatever!) if there is something we can to improve the meetings for your interest. We do have an exciting fall schedule of events for both new and experienced hams. This month's meeting will be a real "double whammy"- feed your tummy with ice cream and your mind with a discussion/debate about the value (or lack thereof) of continuing the requirement for CW proficiency for the more advanced classes of ham license. If you have an opinion, it should be an interesting evening. I hope to see you there.

73, Gailen

## ICE CREAM SOCIAL!!!

B-VARC Members,

It's time for the annual Ice Cream Social on July 10, 1997. This is always a fun event for the whole family and a time to meet new people and get to know others better. If you plan to attend, and can bring ice cream or trimmings please reply to this message as I am coordinating the event for this year. Hope to see you there!

73, Terri W5BKK

# THE B-VARC BULLETIN

## HOUSTON SHOT NEWS

*by Al Mattis - N5AFV*

Tom Henderson - K4CIH, president of Ten Ten International, has announced that official Ten Ten QSL cards have been designed and are now ready for order. Any members of Ten Ten International who are interested in the QSL cards should contact Rick Pourciau - NV5A (The Sign Man) in Baton Rouge, LA for information and pricing. Pourciau may be reached by E-mail at [nv5a@aol.com](mailto:nv5a@aol.com).

Visit the Houston SHOT chapter home page at <http://www.clarc.org/shot/> when you get on the Internet. The site contains information about the chapter, past editions of the Houston SHOT News, and the Ten Ten DX column written Mike Davidson - N5MT, the SHOT chapter head. The chapter thanks Bruce Paige - KK5DO, for constructing and maintaining the page, and the Clear Lake Amateur Radio Club (CLARC) for providing space on their server for the page.

Several national events for members of Ten Ten International will be held during the summer. The Ten Ten International Convention will be held in Council Bluffs, Iowa on July 10-13, 1997. The annual Paper Chasers Bash will be held August 13-17, 1997 at the Circus Circus Casino and Hotel in Reno, NV. Attendees should ask for a room on the second floor of the Main Tower when they make reservations.

The Minuteman (MA) chapter of Ten Ten International reminds all members

that they have a slow speed CW net on 28.150 Mhz every Sunday evening at 7:30 PM local time. The net control station is Sonny Cascio - K1SVP. This net provides a good opportunity for members to practice their CW skills, and the summer E-layer propagation will allow many stations from outside MA to check into the net.

SHOT member Bruce Paige - KK5DO had the misfortune of having his house hit by lightning during a thunder storm last month. Bruce's Icom 756, Icom 970, Hy-Gain Ham IV rotor, and the computer in his shack all sustained damage. Bruce's experience should remind us all how important it is that amateur radio operators take precautions to protect their equipment from lightning damage.

Paper chasers continue to be active on 28.345 MHz and 28.375 MHz during band openings. The occurrence of summer E-layer propagation has brought more activity to the band. The Twin Cities (MN), Steel City (IL), Route 66 (IN), and Pirates of the Mississippi (IL) chapters have announced monthly specials for paper chasers to promote activity when the band is open. Ten Ten members were delighted to learn that Gump Gardner - N3GZE was released from hospital after being treated for pneumonia. Gardner is the chapter head of the Fort McHenry (MD) chapter.

Health problems have caused Alice and Paul Jenkins (NR4R and W4UIQ), chapter head and certificate manager of the Chattanooga Choo Choo (GA), Choo Choo Belles (GA) and Computrain (GA)

# THE B-VARC BULLETIN

chapters to suspend the chapters. Alice and Paul will be moving to Florida, and a decision will be made at a later date to either reactivate the chapters, or to declare them QRT. Alice, who has also been manager for the Ten Ten Worked All Counties Award, has turned the county award duties over to Hank Richroath - WASHWI from Gainesville, TX effective June 1, 1997.

Harry Martemyanov - UN7FZ (ex-UL7FZ) from Kazakhstan has asked Ten Ten members for help. Due to a computer crash, he has lost data about his membership in approximately 150 Ten Ten chapters. He asks that any paper chasers who may have received a list of his chapters from him in the last few years contact him by E-mail at [un7fz@kaznet.kz](mailto:un7fz@kaznet.kz) or [martemyanov@usa.net](mailto:martemyanov@usa.net).

Propagation on ten meters this past month has continued to improve. E-layer propagation has brought a number of domestic band openings, and DX openings from Houston to Latin America and the South Pacific were also reported. Stations on the East Coast have reported working Europe. During the past month, I worked stations in AR, CO, FL, IN, KS, KY, MO, OH, TN, TX and Puerto Rico. It has been wonderful to see the return of the summer E-layer propagation season.

Remember, the Houston SHOT (Space Houston On Ten) net meets every Tuesday evening at 8 PM local time on 28.488 MHz. All amateurs are welcome to check in, even if they do not have a

Ten Ten number. If you are not a member of Ten Ten International and wish to join the organization, please check in to the net. There are a lot of exciting activities in Ten Ten, and many friendly people can be found on the ten meter band.

## Sound Off

No Code? by Gary Spence VA2CK

We've all heard the cry "abandon the code!", it's useless outdated, NOT a modern mode!" So I said to myself, "could codes' day really be over? Best left for SKs' fer-til-iz-n' the clover?"

So off went my paddle 'n keyer to a museum, so those curious of our "past" could drop in an' see um. I then bought a computer and a box I was told... would update my station, using all hi-tech modes.

It then was set up, all by my own hand... the screen it lit up, et voilà, Heard Island! I switched to transmit to "talk with this gent" but my screen read "sorry, can't copy 100%!"

"There's static, interference if you could hear it you'd agree... if it ain't armchair copy we machines cry c'est la vie!" It then said "there is, as YOU know, a way to get through, it's called the code, and what luck for you!"

"You've learned this art, you "stuck it out" 'tis a valuable tool, there isn't a doubt." "You've invested your time, and besides the code you did learn,

# THE B-VARC BULLETIN

possession of valuable skills must be...  
EARNED!"

So I say to you now don't get fooled when some say... "Codes an' old dinosaur fadin' away!" It's part of our past, present and future existence... anti-coders prepare for "beaucoup de resistance"

Found on the PA3BWK CW Website  
Donated by Rick, W5RH

## Public Service Corner

By Scott Pederson, ki5dr

Summer again. It's so hot, no one wants to sponsor a public service event when it's 95 in the shade. So the summer months are usually quiet for we "Public Service Event Hired Guns.."

But what about Field Day? One more reason we stress public service events is it provides a good opportunity to practice our emergency communication skills. What better chance than Field Day? Fortunately I saw a lot of club members out at Katy Park this year, and not just to enjoy the food. Many were operating HF (some for the first time) and getting a taste of how much fun it is, and how difficult it can be sometimes.

Recently I overheard a conversation concerning what would happen if a so called "Real Emergency" occurred. This very smart individual stated their first choice for communicators would be those who regularly participate in PS events.

If you think about it, it makes sense. Here's why:

- Our gear is almost NEVER permanently mounted in anything
- Our antennas are portable and easily adapted to changing vehicles.
- Our radios usually have about 12 ways to plug into power depending on the need and what's available.
- We have lots of experience operating from someplace besides home; in ambulances, portable medical tents, etc.
- We have time-proven experience handling a wide variety of traffic, using multiple radios and frequencies, and not always utilizing repeaters - which are often unavailable in emergencies.

So you see, it is important to exercise your gear regularly (My spell-checker recommended the word "Exorcise"! ) by volunteering.

How about operating contests? Starting next month I'm including a section on contests, and wish to include the dates, times, exchange, and rules for each contest. Anyone who works a contest can send me their scores and I'll post them in the newsletter. Highest scoring B-VARC member in ANY contest wins a certificate, to be presented at the December club meeting (I think).

So let's get out there and get active on the bands!

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# THE B-VARC BULLETIN

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## B-VARC Newsletter Sponsors

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### Miscellaneous:

Has anyone built any of the Delta loop configurations that I described either in the B-VARC Newsletter or in my various antenna talks? If you have, I would like to compare notes with you about performance, etc.

Please contact Rick W5RH at 713-266-5667 work or 713-774-5102 home.





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Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club.  
Serving the Greater Houston Area.  
Club Callsign - KC5OIG

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

Editor-In-Chief: Scott Pederson, KI5DR  
(713) 460-5852

E-mail address: [ki5dr@flash.net](mailto:ki5dr@flash.net)

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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.

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#### B-VARC Meeting Schedule

Thursday, July 3rd Board of Dir. Meeting BMOTA  
7:30 p.m. MERA Repeater 145.470  
Open to all B-VARC Members  
Thursday, July 10<sup>th</sup> 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  
3<sup>rd</sup> Friday dinners - 6:30 p.m. SHARP! Location TBA  
Last Sunday Lunches - 2:30 p.m. Location TBA

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

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

Bud King N5UOG  
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Sugar Land TX  
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