

# THE B-VARC BULLETIN

Volume 20, issue 11

November, 1997



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

## Chili Chili Chili! November meeting – Chili Cookoff!

### What's in this issue?

- Marathon Warm-up volunteer help needed - P.6

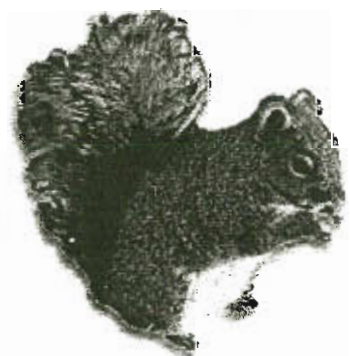
November's meeting will be Elections and the Annual Chili Cook-off! Mark your calendars for November 13<sup>th</sup>!

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



Has the Squirrel problem gone away? There have been many rumors floating around, but don't let your guard down just yet!

Coming up soon in this newsletter will be detailed information concerning B-VARC's Rodent Task Force in action. Stay Tuned for further details.....



# THE B-VARC BULLETIN

**President:**

Gailen Marshall - N4SKR

**Vice-President:**

Rick Hiller - W5RH

**Recording Secretary:**

Terri VanSlyke - W5BKK  
(281) 344-9731

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**Treasurer:**

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(713) 460-1968

**2-Year Board Member:**

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(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 October 1997

*By Jackie, KC5OHJ*

10/6 - 41  
10/13 - 42  
10/20 - 37  
10/27 - 33

73 de KC5OHJ  
IP: 44.76.4.118  
<http://www.nol.net/~iburton>



## 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!

- 6<sup>th</sup> 7:30 p.m. - B-VARC Board Meeting
- 13<sup>th</sup> 7:30 p.m. - B-VARC Regular Meeting
- 30<sup>th</sup> - Last Sunday Luncheon - TBA

### Public Service Events!

#### MARATHON WARMUP SERIES

- **Nov 16, 1997** HMSA Classical 25K Contact Allen Mattis. See article in this month's newsletter.
- **Dec 7, 1997** All-Tel SLT First Colony 30K Contact Scott Pederson, ki5dr at (713) 460-5852.
- **January 18, 1998** Houston Marathon. Contact Carl Hacker KB5LDY.
- **April, 1998** MS-150 2 day ride from Houston to Austin (The "Big" One!) Contact Bret Prichard 713-526-8967

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## Meeting Program

The November program will be elections and the Annual Chili Cookoff!

Here's the December meeting information:

## DECEMBER MEETING HOME BREW CONTEST!!!!!!

### CONTEST CATEGORIES

'Homebrewed equipment'—rigs, tuners, amplifiers, keys and keyers, software (must be demonstrated). Includes any item in the prototyping phase but the entry must have a documented design with schematic or drawing and a prototype. 'Antennas'—homebrew or significantly modified—not built from a kit (as all commercial antennas are kits) 'Kits/Modified/Packaged equipment'—any piece of gear put together from a commercial kit, significantly modified from the original or rebuilt (ie. old radios) or packaged into one cohesive unit (ie. portable packet station). Documentation or before/after pictures are required to show the work done.

### PRIZES

Homebrew

1<sup>st</sup>—1997 ARRL Handbook

2<sup>nd</sup>—ARRL Radio Frequency Interference Book

3<sup>rd</sup>—QRZ Ham Call Database CD

Antennas

1<sup>st</sup>—ARRL Antenna Handbook with Software

2<sup>nd</sup>—ARRL Antenna Compendium #5 with software

3<sup>rd</sup>—Vertical Antenna Classics Book

Kits/Modified/Packaged Gear

1<sup>st</sup>—73 or CQ Magazine—1 Year Subscription

2<sup>nd</sup>—Introduction to Radio Frequency Design Book

3<sup>rd</sup>—MFJ-116 24 Hour Clock

## RULES

- 1) To enter you must be a member in good standing of B-VARC.
- 2) All equipment must be entered by 8:00 PM
- 3) Equipment must be able to be viewed both inside and out

## JUDGING:

**Equipment will be judged anonymously as possible. Minimum of 2 judges per category.**

Contestants will be asked to judge categories that they have not entered. That way they can enter one category and can judge a different category.

## Tech Corner

I will have several copies, Xerox, of the 47 CFR Part 97. The amateur radio service communication rules of which we all abide. A gud ham should have a copy of the rules in his/her shack at all times. A short stack of rosters and applications should be fine for the CHILE NITE, since all will be eating and rejoicing.

Tnx

John,  
KM5HP

## THE ANNUAL CHILI SUPPER-- November 13th.

Join us for a night of Chili sampling and some ham radio camaraderie. Of course, we will have something of technical interest there to satisfy your hunger for 'ham radio stuff' too!

## 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.

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09/03/97--N5CPA, W5EFB, KJ5SS, KI5SC, KB5PAJ, KM5DG, WA5TWL, KM5ID, K5LJ, KK5JJ, N5VXU, K5VRJ, AB5BA, N5MAN, KF4MCI, W8SVR, NM5K, KK5UO, N5UOG. (19)

09/10/97--N5CPA, KM5ID, KJ5SS, N5VXU, W5IHY, KE5SR, WA5TWL, K5LJ, KM5DG, AK5G, NM5K, KK5W, KA0TEN, KC5JRL, N5UOG. (15)

09/17/97 N5CPA, W5EFB, N5UOG, KK5SC, N5ZPF, W5GHK, KK5UO, KA0TEN, KK5W, W5IHY, N5OAC, KJ5SS, K5VRJ/P, AB5BA/P, K5LJ, WN5A, KR4YP, KM5ID, KC4MXN, KA4DXY. (20)

09/24/97 N5CPA, W5EFB, N5UOG, KJ5SS, KI5SC, KB5PAJ, KK5UO, K5LJ, W5IHY, N5VXU, KK5SC, WD8RZA, KM5ID, W8SVR, AE4PD, WB5VYR, WA5TWL, KK5W, WN5A, KA0TEN. (20)

## Code Practice Net

As I have been doing the net nearly 2 years now, I will no longer do the Code Practice Net after December 20, 1997. If someone else would like to do it, I would be happy to assist them but I cannot tie up my Monday and Wednesday evenings any longer. It has been fun and I hope I have helped some of you to attain a higher class license.

Email can be sent to [KK5DO@AMSAT.ORG](mailto:KK5DO@AMSAT.ORG)

73...Bruce KK5DO

## President's Message for October



QST! QST! QST! Well, ham dudes and dudettes, the weather is finally about to cool off again. It will soon be cool enough for the chili cookoff club meeting. Everyone is invited to bring friends, family and ...CHILI. I have been around this BVARCian culinry delight for some years and , if you have not partsken, shame on you!!! Een if you DON'T like chili, onions, jalepenos, chesses , crackers and the like, come for the fellowship and coffee (JAR's is really the best !).

Even if you don't like chili, if you are a BVARC member, you should come for the annual elections. We will take nominations from the floor and conduct our election according to the bylaws. I had several people tell me this year that they liked what we tried to do with the club meetings in particular. I had several tell me they did NOT like what we did. I attempted to listen to everyone and act as best as possible. Some of the experiments worked (upgraded programs. THANKS, W5RH!) and some did not

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(Board meeting on the air). But, like it or not, if you did not vote last year, you should not complain. And if you don't vote this year, you still should not complain with whatever happens next year.

So be in your place on November 13 to get your voice heard at the BVARC elections. You'll be glad you did. A final note...you builders keep at it. The prizes for the December meeting will be outstanding! See you on the bands.

73 de N4SKR

## HOUSTON SHOT NEWS

*by Al Mattis - N5AFV*

HOUSTON SHOT NEWS for October, 1997  
by Al Mattis - N5AFV

Ten Ten International reminds all members who have changed their call sign during the recent vanity call gates to notify Ten Ten International of their new call. Several problems have been encountered where previously held call signs were reissued, and both the previous and current holder of the call sign had been issued a ten ten number. Just a short note to 10-10 International Net, Inc., 643 North 98th Street #142, Omaha, NE 68114-2342 will allow the data base to be updated. Call sign changes may also be reported by E-mail to wa6poz@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.

The SHOT chapter is pleased to welcome Buddy Lindner, KC5NSW, as our newest local member. During the past month, K5PUD, KC5QCB and N1LFN also joined the SHOT chapter as non-local members. The continuing increase in propagation as we move into the next solar cycle has caused an increase in applications for SHOT membership and upgrades.

Remember that 28.170 MHz is used by many Ten Ten members as a CW calling frequency. The frequency of 28.335 MHz is used by many Ten Ten members while mobile.

Paper chasers continue to be active on 28.345 MHz and 28.375 MHz during band openings. The Steel City (IL), Eagle Watch (AL), Fort McHenry (MD), Cornerstone (MD), and Pirates of the Mississippi (IL) chapters have announced specials for paper chasers to promote activity when the band is open. Two new Ten Ten chapters have been formed. Ten Ten International is pleased to welcome their newest chapters - the Neanderthal chapter in Germany, and the Oceans of the World chapter in Florida.

Ten Ten members were happy to hear that Hugh Sullivan, WA4QZU, of Kentucky, has been released from the hospital following a triple bypass operation after experiencing cardiac problems. Sullivan is a past vice president and director of Ten Ten International. Sad news was received that Nat Green, 8P6SA, of Barbados has become a silent key. Green, who had been net manager for the Ten Ten International daily net on 28.800 MHz for many years, was active on the air until a few days before his death. A report has also been received that Rob Walter, VK6RG, of Australia, a well known DX member of Ten Ten International, also became a silent key in late September. Also, Joyce Walton,

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KB7WLS, of Oregon, has become a silent key. Walton's husband, Dave, KB7DGZ, is the chapter head and certificate manager of the Speedway chapter (OR) of Ten Ten International.

Ten meter propagation continued to show improvement during the past month. A number of openings between Europe and the eastern United States were reported, and there were also a few reports of openings to South Africa. Frequent Latin American and Caribbean contacts were reported by Houston stations.. At times, Latin American and Caribbean stations were strong enough that I could work them with my 25 watt mobile on the way home from work. Even though the current low of the solar cycle continues to linger on, there are signs that propagation is improving.

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.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR MARATHON WARM-UP SERIES 25K RACE

Al Mattis N5AFV

New Radio Technology to be Used at Houston Race

by Al Mattis N5AFV

This year's Classical 25K Marathon Warm-Up Series race, which will be held in downtown Houston on November 16th , will introduce new technology to the Houston running community. This race will be the first time in Texas that the ChampionChip is used to time runners. The ChampionChip is a pedestrian version of the EasyTag used on vehicles in the Houston metropolitan area toll road system.

ChampionChip is the trade name for an electronic system used to record runners' time and place in a race. The system uses a small transponder attached to the runner's shoe, and specially designed mats at the start and finish lines. The mats contain an antenna that emits an electromagnetic field. This electromagnetic field causes the transponders to identify as they cross the mat. Each transponder has a unique identifier consisting of two letters followed by four numbers. The transponder number is tagged to the runner's personal information in the computer. Thus the computer instantly knows the age group and sex of the runner, and can calculate the finishing time and place of the runner.

When I heard that the ChampionChip system was going to be used at the 25K race, I had some concern regarding the possible existence of RFI between amateur radio and the ChampionChip system. Two Houston area amateur radio operators, Carl Hacker, KB5LDY, and Claudia Kozinetz, N5VCZ, had seen the ChampionChip system used at the 100th running of the Boston Marathon in 1997. Carl and Claudia reported that there were many radio transmitters in the finish line area, and that no problems appeared to exist.

The ChampionChip system was demonstrated in Houston at a small race on October 13, 1997, in Memorial Park. I took the opportunity to check out the system, and to see if any problems

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resulted from operation of an amateur radio near the start and finish line mats. I had some concern that amateur radio operators providing race communications might cause RFI that would cause the ChampionChip system to malfunction. I first tested the ChampionChip transmitters to see if nearby transmissions from an HT would affect the electromagnetic field of the mats. No effects were noted during transmission of the HT on either the 2 meter or 70 centimeter bands using 5 watts. The HT was held just inches away from the transmitter. A similar test was conducted at the mats. Again, no effect on the electromagnetic field's ability to cause the transponders to identify was observed when the HT transmitted next to the mats. A variety of frequencies in the 2 meter and 70 centimeter bands were used during the tests.

The race officials did not know what frequency the ChampionChip transmitter uses to generate the electromagnetic field, but I suspect that is a low frequency below the AM broadcast band. Using a handheld scanner, I was unable to hear any signal that was generated by the Champion Chip system on any VHF or UHF frequency. I was not only concerned that amateur radio transmissions might interfere with the ChampionChip system, but that the ChampionChip transmitter might also interfere with amateur radio transmissions. After twenty minutes of testing, I could find no interference. The two radio devices did not appear to have any effect on each other.

The Classical 25K Marathon Warm-Up race will be held Sunday, November 16, 1997, in downtown Houston, and volunteers are needed to provide communications for the event. Because the race starts at 7 AM, communications volunteers need to arrive by 6 AM. The race lasts several hours, and all communications volunteers were released by 10:45 am last year.

If you wish to help provide communications at this year's 25K race, please contact Al Mattis, N5AFV, at 281-597-2516 during the daytime, or 713-721-3637 in the evening before 9 PM, or by E-mail at [afmattis@hal-pc.org](mailto:afmattis@hal-pc.org).

## Scanner Jack's Corner

*By Jack, KB5TMY*

(This month's Scanner Jack article was submitted by Irv, KK5QQ concerning HPD frequencies used during the Marathon warmup series. Jack's articles will return to the newsletter as soon as I fix my fax modem, which is currently TOAST. Ed.)

HPD was using their Channel 5, 460.425 @ for race traffic. Occasionally two units would switch to Channel 8, 460.225 (S) for car-to-car stuff.

Central dispatch is 460.100 @, but it would be cluttered with non-event traffic. Most of the HPD UHF channels are between 460.025 and 460.550 & they all could be scanned; however, at least nine are dispatch channels that collectively will be active almost all of the time.

In an area where FBSO or HCSO, or Sugar Land for that matter, are providing the police function, officers from these agencies probably will be on their trunked system. Each agency has its own TRS and they would be almost impossible to monitor effectively with a standard scanner. For Sugar Land, at least, the new "Trunk Tracker" scanners would enable a listener fairly quickly to determine what "Talk Group" is being used and the scanner can be made to follow that group only.

73 de Irv, KK5QQ

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## Public Service Corner

By Scott Pederson, ki5dr

Hi everyone, Just a quick note this month to ask for a few extra volunteers for the Marathon warmup series in November and December. We are DANGEROUSLY short of folks this time around, and if the current trend continues, Ham Radio might not be involved at all in future events.

It would be a sad thing if the event coordinators could not reliably depend on Ham communications for future events. They would be forced to go with commercial equipment, or worse, do without. If this happens, everyone loses.

So, get out and volunteer! Even one event a year is more than enough!

Since my last article I've had a few B-VARC members step forward to anonymously donate money for Public Service Event awards at the end of the year. I will have more information on this in future articles.

Thanks es 73 de Scott

## 1997 20K Warm Up Run

Thanks to all the volunteers who participated in the 1997 20K Warm Up Run held Sunday, October 19, 1997. The race officials were very grateful for our assistance to help them pull off a truly great event. They were very complimentary about our professionalism and communication skills.

There were a total of 14 ham volunteers with some people performing more than one assignment. This year, there were two people who were transported to the hospital via an

ambulance. Hams were involved in both of these medical situations.

If you are interested in working the remaining two warm up runs in November and December this year or the Marathon in January, please contact the coordinator of those events, listed elsewhere in the newsletter.

Stephen Dunkelberger, N5JBL

## Estate sale information

By Claude Sessions

GARAGE SALE OF ELECTRONIC AND HAM RADIO EQUIPMENT, GEAR, PARTS, ETC.  
FINAL OPPORTUNITY TO BROWSE AND MAKE AN OFFER, EVERY THING MUST GO.TELL YOUR FRIENDS—GET THE WORD OUT PLEASE...  
NOVEMBER 8, 1997  
8:00 AM TILL 2 PM  
1205 7<sup>th</sup>. STREET      ROSENBERG, TEXAS  
JANE WOOD X Y L OF W5GLD281-342-2414



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**State Farm Insurance Companies  
Bob Kunesh, ChFC  
Agent  
Also WA5NRM**

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**12135-B Bissonnet  
Houston, TX 77099  
(281) 498-4386 (office)  
(281) 498-2292 (fax)  
(281) 879-9511 (home)**

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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.

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#### B-VARC Meeting Schedule

Thursday, November 6<sup>th</sup> Board of Dir. Meeting  
BMOTA 7:30 p.m. MERA Repeater 145.470  
Open to all B-VARC Members

Thursday, November 13<sup>th</sup> B-VARC Meeting  
7:30 p.m. Sugarland Community Center

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#### B-VARC Eating Schedule

Saturdays-7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Location: New York Coffee Shop, 9720 Hillcroft @ S. Braeswood

Also VICTOR'S DELI, SUGAR CREEK AND 59 South in Sugarland

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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November, 1997

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

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE