


THE B-VARC BULLETIN

Volume 23, issue 3
March 2000

<p>Houston Ham Help Line 24-Hours 281-495-3495</p> <p>Get information about local clubs and testing sessions.</p>	<p>Membership renewal information:</p> <p>Members whose membership has expired or is near expiration will find their membership date highlighted on the mailing label.</p>	 <p>http://www.hal-pc.org/~bvarc</p>
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ARRL Membership - Members are urged to renew their ARRL membership through BVARC, allowing the club to take advantage of reduced insurance rates. Contact Irv, KK5QQ at 281-437-6755 for information

<p>What's in this issue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Notes from the Prez – P. 2 ➤ BVARC Activities – P. 2 ➤ Board of Directors Minutes, March 9 - P. 3 ➤ Amendments to By-Laws - P. 4 ➤ ARRL Interference Actions - P. 4 ➤ V.E.C. Exam Results - P. 5 ➤ Monday Night PSN Check-ins - P. 6 ➤ BVARC Rag Chew Net - P. 6 ➤ Scanner Jack's Corner - P. 6 ➤ This Month's Pics - P. 7 	<p><i>Amateur Radio Classes for Beginners Technician Element 2</i></p> <p><i>Wednesday Nights, May 3rd thru June 7th 7:00 to 9:00 P. M.</i></p> <p><i>St. Paul Presbyterian Church 7200 Bellaire Blvd, Room F2</i></p> <p><i>6 weeks study for the written test</i></p> <p><i>Contact Robert Moore, KK5UO at 713-774-0314</i></p>
<p>Many thanks to John Moore for printing this month's issue and to Claude Sessions for production.</p>	<p>Board of Directors: Larry Jacobson, President - K5LJ, k5lj@nstci.com Glen Jenkins, WB4KTF, vice-president - wb4ktf@pipeline.com Doug Woodruff, Recording Secretary - KC5VYZ, kc5vyz@arrl.net Irv Smith, Corresponding Secretary - KK5QQ, kk5qq@aol.com Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM, Treasurer - mitchl@hal-pc.org Mike Hardwick, N5VCX, 3-Year-Director, n5vcx@worldnet.att.net Robert Moore, 2-Year-Director - KK5UO, kk5uo@hal-pc.org Darrell Kirk, One-Year-Director - KC5JAR, darrell@evl.net John Moore, Past President - KK5NU, jwm@hal-pc.org</p>

Notes from the President - March 2000

Prez Sez:

At the next general membership meeting (April 6), there will be several amendments to the BVARC by-laws to vote on. Two changes would remove the reference to mail delivery of the general membership meeting notice as the only approved method. A third change would specify a mechanism for replacing board members if they become incapacitated while in office. This occurred last year when Gene Russell had a stroke early in his tenure as treasurer. The removal of a specific reference to mail delivery of the meeting notice does not mean that we plan to discontinue mailing the newsletter (with its notice of the up-coming meeting) to members. What it will do is allow those, **who wish it**, to receive notification of the membership meeting by e-mail and get the newsletter by attachment to the e-mail or via download from the BVARC Web page. This could lead to some savings to the club if a significant portion of the membership elect this option.

Some of you may have heard of the \$8,000 fines leveled against a couple Houston hams who were guilty (according to the FCC) of malicious interference to the MERA repeater. I think this is significant and should indicate to all potential squirrels that the FCC is serious about cleaning up the airwaves. I can only hope that similar fines are leveled against perpetrators of inappropriate language and intentional interference on other bands.

The next meeting - as noted elsewhere in the newsletter - will feature RC model airplanes. This should be entertaining and fun! See you all there.

73,

Larry - K5LJ

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Schedule of BVARC Activities

Month	General Meeting	Program	BOD Meeting	VEC Test
Apr	6	Joe Ross - W5BSA model airplane ctrl	13	11
May	4		11	9

Jun	1	8	13
Jun	24 & 25 Field Day - TBA		

Public Service Events:

It is that time of the year again, public service events. This is a way to put your radio and license to a very good use. This e-mail is for several Houston events as well as the MS150 Bike Ride. I need volunteers for the events. Please reply if you are interested or you want to sign up for any of the events. If you worked the event in the past, let me know what position and I will try to assign you to the same one this year. If you are interested in the bike rides, remember you need to have at least a VHF radio with 25 watts of power and some type of gain antenna (most radios have 25 watts output and even a hand held with a small amp will produce that amount of power. A 3db gain mobile antenna will work just fine. **QUARTER WAVE ANTENNAS** cause many problems so **do not bring one**). Let me know what event, when you can be there, what type of equipment, and any other ideas that you may have.

The MS150 this year will have a new finish line at Applied Materials on Hwy 290. The hams in Austin will need to coordinate and determine a new operating area for the finish line. I will be checking with the Austin Hams in the next few weeks to determine the best area and the best repeaters for the finish line. The MS is expecting about 7000 riders this year, 1000 more than last year. The MS150 is the tough event to work so everyone that is interested please contact me and let me know.

Working these events helps us prepare for the disasters that we are suppose to be able to work in. This will give you experience on setting up you equipment in not so favorable areas and then moving 6 more times during the day. It helps you pass traffic under high stress conditions and lets you determine the best way to process it when it is received. Amateur radio needs a positive light in the public's eye and this will help us achieve this goal.

EVENT	DATE	NEED	CONTACT
Joint Walk - Houston	3/26/00	12	Looking for a ham coordinator
Ft Bend Co Special Olympics Rosenberg	4/1/00	10	Don LeRoux 281-342-4860
Tour de Cypress -	4/2/00	32	Looking for a ham coordinator
MS150 Bike Ride - Houston to Austin	4/15 & 16	110	Mike Hardwick 713-771-4625
March of Dimes Walk America	4/30/00	35	Marty Blaise 713-896-4625

Mike Hardwick - N5VCX
Public Service Event Coordinator
Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

Please call me at home at 713-771-4625 if you need you information sooner than later, otherwise send me an e-mail and I will contact you.

**Board Directors (BOD) Meeting Minutes
Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club
March 9, 2000**

President Larry Jacobson called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm with a quorum. Those in attendance were president Larry Jacobson - K5LJ, vice president Glen Jenkins - WB4KTF, treasurer Cameron Mitchell - K5CAM, past president John Moore - KK5NU, 3-year board member Mike Hardwick - N5VCX, 2-year board member Robert Moore - KK5UO, 1-year board member Darrell Kirk - KC5JAR. Ralph Higginbotham - KM5MG filled in for Irv Smith, who was out of town. Visiting was Dick Harrison - KB5WZI and Anita Kirk.

Since recording secretary by Doug Woodruff was not present and there were no minutes from the last board meeting to approve. The approval of the minutes was tabled until the next meeting per the request of Larry Jacobson. The motion was made and seconded.

No report was available from the corresponding secretary since Irv was out of town.

Treasurer report by Cameron was presented. Copies may be obtained from Cameron. Motion to accept was made by John Moore and Mike Hardwick 2nd. Report was accepted

Vice president report by Glen discussed upcoming programs. For April 6th will have model airplanes from the model airplane club that also uses that community center. On May 4th, Dale, KC2PZ, will discuss mobile operations on with highlights on antennas, interference, and mounting problems. No other programs have been set for June or further. Randy Pollard will probably have a program on repeaters in either June or July.

Larry presented a *Thank you* letter that had been received from Scott Medbury on the sale of the Girl Scout cookies at the last meeting. Scott thanked B-VARC for the opportunity to have the sale. It went very well for the Girl Scouts.

Old Business:

A code practice class later in the year was discussed. The location was the main focus, with the Red Cross building being the location that everyone preferred. Mike said that the Red Cross is a good location, a 60 day lead time for the request is a must. It was determined that the best time to have the class would be in the months of September and October. Mike said that he would apply for the classroom beginning on Tuesday for September 5th through the end of October. It was mentioned that other clubs such as ECHO might be interested to join in with the class.

The web space has been renewed at no charge at HAL-PC by John Moore. He said that the next expiration date will be 9/29/2000.

John said that he will continue doing the bulletin for a few more

months but a place will need to be determined on where the bulletin can be done.

John reported that as of the BOD meeting the web-site has had 984 hits since January 1, 2000.

President report by Larry. Nothing new at this time. He said that he is still looking for a chairperson for Field Day to coordinate the event. He is looking for volunteers to help with the event as well. Larry said that he will be sending out e-mails to some of the club members.

Larry brought up the recent problems with the MERA repeater. The problems were discussed by Mike, Larry and Dick. The problems were centered on a bad CTCSS tone board that caused an intermittent failure whether it was on or not. Other problems were discussed and was passed along to Dick, who is a MERA board member. It was brought up that a "pass the hat" time may need to be done at one of the meetings to help with the funding of the repeater. Dick said that it would not be a problem doing that and in the past (last October) MERA was at the meetings requesting funds.

Mike brought up the recent news on the two hams that were fined \$8,000 each for interference on the MERA repeater. He said that this needs to be stressed more at the meetings to let other people know that the FCC is still enforcing the rules and even if it takes a while, the squirrels do get caught. Mike suggested that Larry should write something for the newsletter outlining the people that got caught. Larry said that he would write something for the next newsletter. There was a short discussion on a possible new squirrel that was on the repeater one day. The new squirrel was extremely vulgar during all transmissions. The squirrel exhibited no patterns similar to the past squirrels and he gave no indication of any type of identification. Mike said that even though there were two people caught, there may be more squirrels that were never caught.

Larry discussed his suggested changes to the by-laws to be discussed by the board and published in the next newsletter for review by the membership. The proposed changes will appear in the March newsletter and then can be voted on by the membership at the April general meeting which will have a large turnout due to the model airplane program.

New business:

Ralph Higginbotham - KM5MG requested help on an estate sale of a friend of his, Jack McCallon - W5QMY, SK. Ralph has inventoried the equipment and presented a list to the club to ask for help on disposing the equipment for Jack's widow. John mentioned that Jack WN5A or Louis KD5GM would be two people to contact to help get fair prices on the equipment. Ralph was given their numbers to give them a call.

Dick Harrison, KB5WZI, discussed his thoughts on the proposed change in the by-laws on mail notice, listed in Article 5, Section F. Dick stated that he was against the change and that it could be a fatal action on the club. He said that he felt that the

move was not necessary and that any type of mail notification should be maintained at all costs. Larry discussed the proposed change as a necessary move to save funds. John said that a large percentage of the club membership has e-mail and notifications can be electronically as well. Dick was encouraged to attend the next general meeting to discuss the change and present his ideas on what could happen if the change is made.

Motion was made to adjourn by John and seconded by Darrell. Motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted by board member Mike Hardwick - N5VCX

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PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE B-VARC BY-LAWS (April 6 general meeting)

Currently the BY-LAWS of B-VARC, INC. read as follows in Article II - OFFICERS

Article II Section D

"Officer vacancies shall be filled by the Board of Directors by appointment for the unexpired term."

It is proposed that the following be added to this Section D-2 to read:

"In the event a of continuing disability and inability of an Officer or Director to continue in the performance of his/her duties; the same shall be treated as if a vacancy has occurred and the Board of Directors may appoint as a substitute, any duly qualified member of the Club, to perform the duties of the office left unfulfilled by the said continuing disability for the duration of the same."

Further, it is proposed to modify the by-laws to permit member notification of meetings and receiving of the newsletter by means other than US postal service as follows:

Article V Section F
from:

"The Corresponding Secretary shall notify members of the Club

of each membership meeting by written notice to be mailed seven (7) calendar days prior to the date of the meeting. Such notice may be included in the Club newsletter, if feasible and timely."
to:

"The Corresponding Secretary shall notify members of the Club of each membership meeting seven (7) calendar days prior to the date of the meeting. Such notice may be included in the Club newsletter, if feasible and timely."

Article IX Section B
from:

"Proposals for amendments to the By-Laws shall be submitted in writing to the President of the Club at least thirty (30) days prior to a membership meeting. The Corresponding Secretary shall include any proposed amendments in a meeting notice mailed to members in accordance with the provision in ARTICLE V, Section F of these By-Laws."
to:

"Proposals for amendments to the By-Laws shall be submitted in writing to the President of the Club at least thirty (30) days prior to a membership meeting. The Corresponding Secretary shall include any proposed amendments in a meeting notice to members in accordance with the provision in ARTICLE V, Section F of these By-Laws."

**From ARRL News and Information section:
FCC Fines Two Texas Amateurs for Malicious Interference**

NEWINGTON, CT, Feb 16, 2000--The FCC has fined two Texas hams \$8000 apiece for allegedly interfering with a local repeater and failing to identify. Paul E. Holcombe, K4TOF, and Robert L. Myers, N5WLY, both of Houston, were notified last month by the FCC's Houston office. The fines come in the aftermath of an FCC investigation undertaken last year that involved the use of direction-finding equipment.

In each Notice of Apparent Liability, the FCC noted logging complaints of apparently intentional interference over a period of more than five years to the Memorial Emergency Repeater Association's 145.47 machine in Houston. The interference "was allegedly caused by stations transmitting unidentified tones, inflammatory or derogatory remarks, and unmodulated signals, none of which were identified with an FCC-assigned call sign," the FCC said.

In the wake of separate investigations last June, the FCC had cited Holcombe and Myers for alleged willful and malicious interference and failure to identify while operating on the 145.47 machine on separate occasions earlier in 1999. There's no indication from the FCC that the two men acted in concert, and the cases are being handled separately. Both operators were cited for violating §97.101(d) and §97.119(a) of the FCC's Amateur Service rules.

The FCC Notice of Apparent Liability issued to Meyers says that last February 24, Houston FCC personnel using direction-finding gear tracked transmissions interfering with the MERA repeater to Meyers' Jeep Cherokee. An FCC Notice of Violation followed a June 1 inspection visit to Meyers.

Responding to the NOV, Meyers denied the violations and any operation at the times cited. "Meyers' response letter also stated that Meyers would take precautionary steps to insure that no accidental transmissions would occur from his station," the FCC noted in its NAL.


The FCC Notice of Apparent Liability issued to Holcombe recited a similar story. On May 25, Houston FCC personnel using direction-finding equipment tracked interfering transmissions to Holcombe's Toyota. An FCC agent interviewed Holcombe and inspected the ham gear inside the vehicle. The equipment, the FCC said, included a transceiver "tuned to the MERA repeater frequency pair and capable of transmitting on the MERA repeater frequency." The FCC said Holcombe admitted the vehicle and the gear were his, but he denied intentionally making any transmissions that day. The Commission cited Holcombe the following month.

In response to last June's NOV, Holcombe said that, although his station may have been inadvertently activated on May 25, he did not intend to interfere with other stations. Holcombe also told the FCC that he suffered from a nerve disorder in his hands that made it difficult for him to manipulate the transceiver's controls.


In both cases, the FCC determined on the basis of its investigation that Meyers and Holcombe did "willfully and maliciously interfere" with communications in progress and failed to identify. The FCC said both violations were willful because transmissions were timed to coincide with those of other repeater users and each operator "sought to conceal his identity by altering the sound of his normal voice and omitting the required identification."

The FCC said it determined the amount of the fines by using the its forfeiture policy, which sets a base fine of \$7000 for intentional interference and \$1000 for failure to identify. In assessing such fines, the FCC said it takes into account the "nature, circumstances, extent, and gravity" of the violations as well as "the degree of culpability, any history of prior offenses, ability to pay, and other such matters as justice may require."

Both men were ordered to pay the fines within 30 days or to file written statements showing why the forfeitures should be reduced or canceled.



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RESULTS OF THE MARCHth AMATEUR EXAMS by: Harold Parker, ND5F

B-VARC again sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examinations that were held on Tuesday evening, March 14, 2000 at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory in Houston.

V. E. TEAM:

Carl Albrecht, AA5JW
Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM
Harold Parker, ND5F

ASSISTANTS:

Cass Germany, KG5IT
John Moore, KK5NU

A total of 28 exams were administered during the evening to 22 applicants. One (1) unlicensed candidate received their new Technician license. Two (2) others upgraded with a total of 20 elements passed. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was 71%.

Congratulations to all the following who upgraded and/or passed exams:

ASHMORE, JOHN E., KI5WV - Element 4B
BISHOP, DARRYL L., KD5BMY - Technician Plus
COFFEY, BRIAN N., N5YPG - Element 3B
CRAIG, ROBERT M., W5RMC - Element 3B
FRENZEL, JOHN C., KA4JDU - Element 4B
GILL JR., JAMES R. - Technician
GRAF, FRANK E., WA5KXP - Element 4B
KEY, JAMES D., N5KOS - Element 3B
KRAMPE, WILLIAM B., KC5GYD - Element 3B
LEVERENZ, HOWARD, KD5DJJ - Element 4B
LYTTLE, ROBERT J., WD5JJB - Element 4B
PATTI, ANDREW P. - Element 3A
POKLADNIK, ROGER L., KB5LFU - Element 4B
POWELL, STEVEN W., KD5TZ - Element 4B
RANEY, GARY A.J., KM5TY - Element 4B
TASSELL, DANIEL D., KC5PCB - Element 3B
THORNTON, RONALD M., KD5JIF - Tech Plus
TROW JR., JOHN H., KD5HUU - Element 3B

2/23/00--N5CPA, K5CEK, W5EFB, KG5KV, W5GHK, AB5BA, KM5DG, K5LJ, N5VXU, WD8RZA, KK5W, KA0TEN. (12)

Many thanks to all the Team Members and Assistants who volunteer their valuable time and effort each month.

All of us at B-VARC again thank Vincent, WA5ETS, and everyone at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory for making these excellent classroom facilities available to us for our exams each month.

..... 73

**Monday night PSN check-ins
(KC5VYZ net control)**

- 2/7 - 30 Doug
- 2/14 - 29 Cam
- 2/21 - 23 Cam
- 2/29 - 28 Doug
- 3/6 - 26 Doug
- 3/13 - 23 Cam



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**SCANNER JACK'S Corner
by Jack Roberts, KB5TMY**

Here are the Houston P. D. frequencies:

Ch	Freq	Comment
1	460.325	N. Shepard
2	460.125	N. E.
3	460.025	S. E.
4	460.0505	Beechnut
5	460.425	Citywide
6	460.100	Central
7	460.350	Special Ops
8	460.225	Car-to-Car
9	460.400	Vice
10	460.450	Homicide
11	460.475	N. W.
12	460.150	West Side Cmd
13	460.075	Sur
14	460.375	Sur
15	460.550	S. Central
16	460.525	TAC
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**B-VARC RAG CHEW Net Check-Ins for February 2000
by Sam Wilson, N5CPA**

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

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 the telephone number announced at the beginning of each net.

2/2/00--N5CPA, K5CEK, KE5SR, W5GHK, N5OAC, WA9YNJ, K5QWI, K5VRB, N5VXU KM5DG, KK5W, KB9QZF, N7LYQ, AB8CC, KM5TY. (15)

2/9/00--N5CPA, KC5SQD, KD5SWD, KE5SR, K5CEK, N5VXU, KK5W, K5VRJ, AB5BA, W5EFB, N5OAC, W5GHK. (12)

2/16/00--N5CPA, K5VRJ, AB5BA, K5CEK, KE5SR, K5NE, NM5K, KI5KD, W5GHK, N9DGA, K5LJ, N5VXU, KC5AVM, WB5VYR, W7RUB. (15)



Scanner Jack talks about SWL



Larry, Irv, John and Mike at work



Girl Scouts selling cookies (thanks, N5VXU)



Scanner (thanks, N5VXU)



VE Session



ditto



ditto



Cass, Harold, Carl, and Cam (almost)

These, and more, in color on the Web edition