



BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

JUNE 2007

VOLUME 31 ISSUE 6

BVARC JUNE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

7:30 PM, Thursday, June 14.

NOTE LOCATION CHANGE

IT IS NOT AT THE SUGAR LAND COMMUNITY CENTER

General meeting will be held at 14141 SW Frwy at the Unocal building. It is between Williams Trace and Sugar Creek Blvd on the south side of Hwy 59.

The speaker will be Steve Lee of the Federal Communications Commission. He will have a presentation on amateur radio enforcement by the FCC.

REMEMBER FIELD DAY 2007

Saturday & Sunday, June 23 & 24

MAY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Mike Hardwick, President, BVARC, talked about Texas Senate bill SB154 - Will it really affect amateur radio?

Allen Brier, V.P., BVARC, talked about Allocation by bandwidth - Will it work?



Mike, N5VCX



Allen, N5XZ

President's Corner

“CQ Field Day, CQ Field Day This is” It is time to get ready for Field Day! it is just around the corner at the end of June. The club's field day coordinators are working hard to make sure everyone will have a great time at this year Brazos Valley Field Day. Make sure to come and join the fun at the Richmond Fire Training field. Look elsewhere in newsletter for more information. If you would like to help out, contact Robert KD5YVQ at 713-248-1381 or kd5yvq@earthlink.net.

The MS150 was a great success this year with nearly 12,000 riders participating. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Lone Star Chapter, is expecting the ride will raise over \$12 million dollars this year for MS research and support for those with MS. This year there were over 120 amateur radio operators providing communications for the event. Without their hard work and knowledge, it would be nearly impossible to have the event. I thank everyone again that helped on the ride this year and I appreciate their hard work.

Due to changes in scheduling at the community center, the general meeting will be held at the Unocal Building , 14141 SW Frwy. The building is the 8 story building on the south side of Southwest Frwy between Sugar Creek and Williams Trace. Talk-in will be available on the 145.47 repeater.

I am writing this from center of the Adirondack National Park in New York . I am in a little town called Indian Lake with a population of no more that 200. I brought my FT817 to try a little QRP but I have not had time yet to put the dipole antenna together yet. I hope I will have a change to put everything together on a mountain top and might be able to work a little DX.

Hope to see everyone at the meeting and don't forget Field Day.

73

N5VCX

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<http://texasparadise.com/hars/> George DiLetto KD0RW

Public Service events

No events scheduled for June.

Katy Flatland Century Bike Ride 7:00 am Sunday, July 15, 2007

Bicycle ride fund raiser in the Katy/Fulshear areas. Fifteen operators are needed for communications for this event. Operators need at least a VHF mobile radio to volunteer. Talk-in and event will be on the 145.19 repeater with a 123.0 tone. Operators will meet at 5:30 am at the Jack-in-the-Box at Katy Mills Mall just south of Interstate 10 for maps, final instructions and tee shirts. Contact Mike Hardwick, N5VCX at 713-826-6917 or n5vex@att.net for more information.

Monday Night NET Updates

Don't forget the Monday Night Public Service Net starts at **8 pm**, 145.47 (PL -123.0). The order of check-ins start with mobile units first then fixed stations. If you have something for the net, make sure you let Net Control know about it when you check in. We are looking for Net Control Operators. Contact any officer of BVARC if you are interested. Here are recent check-ins with control-ops:

12/11 - 35 - Bill, ws5h	2/12 - 19 - Cam, k5cam	4/9 - 26 - Bill, ws5h
12/18 - 22 - Sid, n5zkd	2/19 - 20 - Sid, n5zkd	4/16 17 - Bill, ws5h
1/1 - 15 - Cam, k5cam	2/26 - Pete, kd5qpx	4/23 - 26 - Pete, kd5qpx
1/8 - 22 - Bill, ws5h	3/5 - 23 - Cam, k5cam	4/30 - 22 - Doug, kc5vyz
1/15 - 18 - Bill, ws5h	3/12 - 23 - Bill, ws5h	5/7 - 24 - Cam, k5cam
1/22 -22 - Pete, kd5qpx	3/19- 17 - Sid, n5zkd	5/14 - 33 - Bill, ws5h
1/29 - 18 - Doug, kc5vyz	3/26 - 21 - Cam, k5cam	5/21 - 14 - Sid, n5zkd
2/5 - 28 - Cam, k5cam	4/2 - 22 - Cam, k5cam	5/28 - 16 - Pete, kd5qpx

TELPAC FOR BVARC???

It would be great to have a BVARC Telpac to add to the digital coverage in the south west of the Greater Houston area. Here is an opportunity for BVARC as a club to own and operate a Telpac gateway without taking anything from the club funds! The telpac would be high quality and would be a great asset for the club to use for public service, particularly emergency communications!

If there is someone, or a group, willing to assemble it, install it and maintain it, I would like to fund it via a donation to the club.

Here is a estimate for the equipment cost:

Item	Cost, \$
KPC3+ TNC	230
Radio, preferably commercial	200?
TNC & PC cables	50
Power supply	200
Antenna	100
Coax + polyphaser	150
Batteries for backup power	70
PC? Can someone provide?	0
Total	1000

If there is someone, or a group, that would like to take this responsibility on for the club, please let me know.

Here are some thoughts on how it would be organized:

- I would make the \$1000 funds available to BVARC and then hand the project over for implementation.
- The person/s taking on the installation would select all equipment and then BVARC would purchase it.
- The equipment would remain the property of BVARC
- The installation would be in the BVARC service area somewhere. Preferably:
 - the antenna height would be 80ft or higher.
 - It would be sited in a building that would benefit from its use (city? County? Company?) but I have no problems if it is located at someone's QTH. Either option would help with internet access.
- If the project costs less than \$1000, then BVARC keeps the balance.

If this project is successful, I would like to fund some other project that would help BVARC.

Why BVARC? It has to be one of the most successful clubs in our area and regularly demonstrates that it is well organized and provides valued public service!

73
Alan, KB2WF at yahoo.com

Minutes of May 2007 Board of Directors meeting of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club:

Mike Hardwick called the monthly Board of Directors meeting for The Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club to order at 7:34 PM on May 4th 2007 at Denny's Restaurant, 8199 SW Freeway; Houston, TX. Attending were: Mike Hardwick, N5VCX (Pres.); Sid Sherwood, N5ZXD (Treas./Cor. Sec.); Peter Sauermilch, KD5QPX (Rec. Sec.); Bill Stone, KS5H (At-Large Dir.); Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM; Charles Frost, K5LBU; Randy Pollard, AK5G; Dave Beers, AF5T.

- 1) Minutes for April 2006 meeting were approved as they appear in the May newsletter.
- 2) Treasurer's Report was presented to the Board.
 - a) Total assets are \$ 13,263.84
 - b) Total liabilities are \$ 133.72
 - c) Bank balance is \$ 9,049.65
 - d) CD value is \$ 3,312.19
- 3) Old Business:
 - a) Hamfest 2008
 - i) Convention status unknown as ARRL board has yet to discussed it.
 - ii) 139 Vendor letters have been sent.
 - iii) Hamfest 2007 deposit refund has been received (less extra table charge) from Ft. Bend County.
 - iv) 2008 Deposit will be placed with Ft. Bend County next week.
 - b) Field Day 2008
 - i) Event captain and team has been identified but not confirmed.
 - ii) Location, Ft. Bend County fire fighting training ground, has not been confirmed.
- 4) New business:
 - a) Stone presented to the board his application for using the club call at an event.
 - b) Stone proposed that the club purchase patches for resale from Discount Uniform at \$0.90 each, qty 100. Board approved proposal.
- 5) Schedule:
 - a) June: Speaker will be Steve Lee. Location probably at the Sugar Land Branch Library, 550 Eldridge, Sugar Land, TX.
 - b) July: Topic TBD
 - c) August: Ice Cream Social
 - d) September & October: Topic TBD
 - e) November: Chili Supper and Elections.
 - f) December: Homebrew equipment night.
- 6) Other Business:
 - a) Public Service Events
 - i) Ride The Prairie, May 19th
 - ii) Katy Flatland, July 15th
- 7) Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM

Submitted by Recording Secretary Peter Sauermilch-KD5QPX

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BVARC Historical Vignettes – Southwest Emergency Radio Repeater Corporation (SERRC)

Allen Mattis N5AFV, Club Historian

The early members of BVARC struggled for over five years to have a 2-meter repeater that would be available for the club members to use on a regular basis. From 1977 through July 1980, the club's nets were held Monday evening at 9 pm on the 146.16/.76 MHz Sugar Land Repeater located on the sugar mill near BVARC's current meeting site.

A change came in August 1980 when the club began using the Cypress Repeater Group (CRG) 147.60/.00 MHz repeater on Dewalt Tower at an elevation of 1549 feet above sea level. Dewalt Tower was also the tower for TV channels 2, 11 & 39. The CRG repeater had an output of 2.5 watts providing coverage within a 50-mile radius of the tower. The August 1980 BVARC Bulletin also reported that the repeater had a 220 MHz link; however, no details were given. Once a year, BVARC newsletters from both 1980 and 1981 contained articles asking BVARC members to contribute money to the CRG to help maintain the repeater.

The February 1980 issue of the BVARC Bulletin contained an exciting announcement regarding a club repeater - "At the present time negotiations are almost complete for the installation of a repeater atop the Southwest Memorial Hospital." The planned repeater would be on 2-meters and would be linked by 443.85 MHz to the 146.16/.76 MHz Sugar Land Repeater. This repeater system would provide a link between Fort Bend County and Harris County Civil Defense (now called Emergency Management). The September 1980 issue of the BVARC Bulletin seemed to indicate progress on the repeater. Gerry, WB5FIV, was announced as the trustee for the repeater and a frequency pair had been requested from the frequency coordinator.

The November 1980 issue of the BVARC Bulletin contained a surprise supplement. The newsletter stated "Included in this mailing is a copy of the Memorial Hospital System publication CARING. Beginning with a double page picture spread on pages 18-19 is a story about the proposed 2-meter/220 mHz repeater installation that B-VARC is trying to get together. This story was written quite a while ago and, at the time of interviews with Bob Spradling and Tom Cole, it was expected that the installation would be operating by publication time." Spradling and Cole had been working very hard to conclude the repeater negotiations with the hospital.

At the January 1981 BVARC general membership meeting, Bob Spradling W5UBD reviewed the status of the proposed repeater and things still appeared to be moving ahead. However, at the next general membership meeting in February 1981, Spradling reported "We are awaiting receipt of a required tax-exempt certification by the IRS which apparently has become ensnarled in an inter-city relocation of the pertinent department of the IRS District." BVARC newsletter editor Stu Lamkin, WB5IGG, added the comment "(Burocracy! Pui! – ED.)" when Spradling's report was printed in the March 1981 BVARC Bulletin.

The BVARC newsletters did not say much about a repeater for the club for next year or more. The reasons for the lack of progress installing a repeater on Southwest Memorial Hospital were not reported in the newsletter. An article in the March 1983 B-VARC Bulletin stated "In March, 1980, an agreement was executed between the Memorial Hospital System and B-VARC, Inc. to provide for the installation of a repeater on the hospital. Unfortunately, due to a number of setbacks, the installation was never made..." At the April 14, 1983 BVARC general membership meeting, Bob Spradling W5UBD, was authorized to dissolve the Southwest Emergency Radio Repeater Corporation that had been set up to operate a repeater under the 1980 agreement with the Memorial Hospital System.

Even though this first attempt at having a repeater on Memorial Southwest Hospital had fallen apart, a foundation had been laid that would quickly bring results. In just a few months both the WB5RDK and MERA repeaters would be on the air from the top of the hospital. Future BVARC Historical Vignettes will chronicle the rest of story.

Improving CW Speed – A Couple of Freeware Programs To Do Just That

By Rick Hiller – W5RH

I recently took on a personal goal of improving my, atrophied, CW skills. Although I know the code, I am not able to read it as fast, or head copy as well, as I used to. I have made the goal to get better at it than I have ever been; which means getting comfortable at 30, or more, words per minute. Big task for me, for sure.

I read various articles on improving copying speeds, but one text really gave me the onus to get going. It's called, "The Art and Skill of Radio-Telegraphy" by William G. Pierpont N0HFF (SK). Download it at:
<http://www.zerobeat.net/tasrt/index.html>

I have tried various methods to improve my CW copying skills, but recently found two free Windows software packages that do all that I seem to need – they are **G4FON Koch Method CW Trainer** and **Morse Runner**.

G4FON Software

The G4FON Koch Method CW Trainer software is really flexible. It will start you out at not knowing the code at all and guide you through or you can use it to generate customized CW practice sessions for the advanced operator. It gives you total control over the sent information, even allowing band noise and signal strength controls for a 'real' QSO copying environment.

3 main features that I particularly like:

- 1) It allows control of the character speed and the spacing of the characters. For example: send 40 WPM characters at 17 wpm spacing.
- 2) It will send you random characters out of a user selected subset of characters that you choose. I still have minor trouble with high speed G's, Z's, X's, S's, H's and 5's, so I can select just these letters and get a continuous high speed barrage of this subset.
- 3) It will take any text(.txt) file and send it, with the same control over characters and spacing. This is my favorite feature. I also record these sessions to a file and burn a CD or download them to my iPod.

Download the G4FON CW software at:

<http://www.g4fon.net/>

Morse Runner

If you know the code, but need, or desire, a boost in your CW copying recognition, retention and comprehension, let me recommend some freeware from Alex, VE3NEA, called Morse Runner 1.68, a CW contest simulation application.

Now, before you turn off at the suggestion of CW Contesting, let me assure you that, although it is contesting based, it does a marvelous job of improving your head copy speed. You can set it up for simple single calls from other stations or do a full-tilt multi-station boogie with QRM, QRN, QSB, Lids and lots of other factors.

I have been using it, since returning from Dayton, and been having a blast and seeing improvement in my high speed CW head copy skills. I have given myself a fairly high WPM goal, and once I get there, I am going to purchase a new QRP CW rig, that I have had my eye on.

Morse Runner is written by Alex Shovkopyas, VE3NEA, and can be downloaded at:

<http://www.dxatlas.com/MorseRunner/>

Summary

Both of these programs will allow you to tailor your CW practice to exactly what you need. I also try to catch and "head copy" the daily ARRL CW Bulletins (18 wpm), which is a retention improvement exercise that works very well, as long as you do it on a daily basis.

So why improve your CW skills? First, CW is fun, especially when you can copy it well. Second, Field Day is coming up in just a few weeks and running CW is a fun way to spend Field Day. (Just ask N5XZ or K5IZO)

Enjoy your improved CW skills. Rick – W5RH

OSCAR-7 – A Blast from the Past

by Allen Mattis N5AFV

The American public was caught by surprise in 1957 when the Soviet Union successfully launched Sputnik, the first man-made satellite to orbit our planet. Amateur radio operators became involved in the space race almost immediately. Because of their radio equipment, it was the amateur radio community that was able to listen to the beep-beep-beep signals of Sputnik on 20.007 MHz. Space communication caught the interest of many amateur radio operators, and Project OSCAR (Orbiting Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio) was born.

The first OSCAR satellite, OSCAR 1, was launched in 1961. It transmitted a simple Hi-Hi morse code message on 144.983 MHz with a 140 mW transmitter. The speed of the Hi-Hi message was controlled by a temperature sensor inside the satellite, and amateur radio operators could determine the temperature by measuring the code speed. OSCAR 1 remained in orbit for only 22 days orbiting the earth 312 times before it re-entered the earth's atmosphere.

OSCAR 7 was launched thirteen years later on November 15, 1974 from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. The satellite carried a radio transponder that could be used by radio amateurs to relay transmissions through the satellite. OSCAR 7 weighed 65 pounds, and was designed for an expected life of three years. The satellite surprised many amateur radio operators by lasting more than twice that long before going silent in mid-1981. It was believed that OSCAR 7 ceased operation due to battery failure, probably due to a shorted cell in one of the batteries.

However, on June 21, 2002 the amateur radio community was in for a big surprise. Pat Gowen, G3IOR reported hearing the OSCAR 7 beacon on 2 meters. The various AMSAT groups around the world spread the word, and several more hams also reported hearing the satellite's beacon. It was soon determined that the transponder on OSCAR 7 worked to a limited degree when the satellite was in sunlight. BVARC's own Bruce Paige, KK5DO, AMSAT's Director of Contests and Awards, has been quoted as saying "This is really awesome!" upon learning that OSCAR 7 was operational again.

I decided to try and operate on OSCAR 7. On May 22, 2007 I tuned across the satellite's downlink band listening for signals during a 46 degree maximum elevation pass of OSCAR 7. My receiving antenna was an MFJ 2m ground plane mounted on the roof of my house with a 50-foot run of 9913 coax for the feedline. I had a Cushcraft dual-band vertical also mounted on the roof that I would use for the uplink on 70cm. These are not ideal satellite antennas, but I was pleasantly surprised to hear a few dits of CW and an off frequency sideband signal. I immediately sent a string of dits with my hand key and tuned the downlink frequency until I heard my dits coming down from the bird. I sent my call sign and prepared to switch to SSB, but I immediately heard CW. N3TE, Steve in Maryland, was calling me, so I went back to him in CW and made the contact. As soon as we completed the exchange, K9CIS, Fred in Illinois called me and I also worked him.

I had not made a CW contact in over seven years, but even my rusty CW was not going to stop me from making contacts on a 33-year-old satellite. Because of my use of a less than adequate antenna, there was considerable fading on my signal, and I doubt that I would have been able to make the contacts in sideband. Those two contacts on OSCAR 7 were some of the most exciting contacts I have made in the almost 30 years I have been an amateur radio operator.

If you want to learn more about OSCAR 7, Emily Clarke, N1DID, maintains a web site dedicated entirely to OSCAR 7 at <http://www.planetemilly.com/ao7/>.

THE BVARC Rag Chew Net

April 2007 check-ins

3910 KHz +/-3KHz Wednesdays at 7:00PM, Sam Wilson, N5CPA, Net Coordinator

04/04/07—No list available.

04/11/07—N5CPA, K5CEK, KE5SR, KJ5SS, K5LBU, K5LKJ, K5LJ, W5UHZ, WA5VRB, KC5HFM, W5LWR, W5RH, KC5IIT, WS5H, WB5EXI, K5LLF, (16 check-ins)

04/18/07—N5CPA, K5LKJ, K5CEK, K5LJ, WS5H, W5UHZ, W5IB, KB5LKE, WA5CYI, K5LBU, K5ADA, KC5HFM, N8NOV, W5TEM, WB5EXI, W5JAO, K0KJ, WB5PNL, (18 check-ins).

04/25/07—K5JWM, KE5SR, W5UHZ, K5CEK, N5CPA, KJ5SS, K5GGG, K5LBU, WS5H, W5IB, K5LKJ, W5LWR, KC5LWK, W5AKE, K5LJ, W5RJA, W5TEM, WB5EXI, K5Hfy, W5HFF, AA5OA, (21 check-ins).

Sam Wilson, N5CPA

B V A R C

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of caps: _____

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4XL **\$43.00**

Name and call, _____ **\$7.50**

NAME: _____ CALL _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ DATE _____

PHONE # () _____

Please make checks payable to BVARC.

2006 Club Officers:

President:

Mike Hardwick, N5VCX
n5vcx@worldnet.att.net

Vice President:

Allen Brier, N5XZ
n5xz@arrl.net

Corresponding Secretary/Treasurer:

Sid Sherwood, N5ZKD
n5zkd@arrl.net

Recording Secretary:

Pete Sauermilch
kd5qpx@arrl.net

One Year Board Member:

Robert Polinski, KD5YVQ
polinski@swbell.net

Two Year Board Member:

Bill Stone, WS5H
dragwtow@wt.net

At Large Board Member

Rick Hiller, W5RH
rhiller@sdicgm.com

Club Happenings:

General Meeting

Second Thursday each month,
Sugar Land Community Center,
226 Matlage Way

Board of Directors Meeting

First Thursday of each month,
Sugar Land Community Center,
See the website.

Volunteer Examiner Program

BVARC administers Amateur License Exams
on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the HCC
Scarcella Technology Campus,

10141 Cash Rd. in Stafford.
Contact John Moore, KK5NU

Eating Schedule

Third Friday Dinner at 7:30 p.m.
Location announced in text of this edition.

Rag Chew Net

3910 KHz +/-3KHz Wednesdays
at 7:00 p.m.

Public Service Net

Monday night on 145.47 (PL 123.0) at
8:00 PM

UPCOMING FEATURED PRESENTATIONS

June

Field Day Kick-off meeting
Federal Communications Commission - Steve Lee - FCC Enforcement and
Amateur Radio

July - TBD

August

Ice Cream Social

Upcoming Hamfests

Hamfest info for the next few months. More information at:
<http://www.arrl.org/hamfests.html#listing>

June 8 – 9, 2007

HamCom 2007

West Gulf Division Convention
Plano, TX, The Plano Centre, [2000 East Spring Creek Parkway](http://www.hamcom.org)
<http://hamcom.org>

Talk-In: 147.18 + (PL107.2)

14 Jul 2007

Tidelands Amateur Radio Society

Texas City, TX
Doyle Convention Center
[2010 5th Avenue North](http://tidelands.org/)
<http://tidelands.org/>
Talk-In: 147.14/167.9; alt 442.025 (PL 103.5)

BVARC EATING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFASTS:

Otto's Bar-B-Que, 7:30 am, Fountains Shopping Center, SW Freeway.
New York Coffee Shop, 7:30a.m., 9720 Hillcroft, in Houston.

THIRD FRIDAY DINNERS: -

June 15th at 7:30 pm

Tio Pepe's Spanish Restaurant 713-667-4409
5213 Cedar
Bellaire, Texas

73, CLAUDE..



Monthly Publication of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club.
Serving Amateur Radio for Southwest Houston and Fort Bend County
Club Call sign – KK5W
BVARC Website: <http://www.bvarc.org>
Editor: John Chauvin, K5IZO, k5izo@yahoo.com
Production Team: Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM, k5cam@arrl.net
Claude Sessions, K5HFY, k5hfy@arrl.net

Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club (BVARC) was organized in 1978, primarily as an emergency communications group available to assist the communities of Missouri City and Stafford when required. Since that time, **BVARC** has grown and expanded its activities to become the most active amateur radio club in the Southwest Houston and Fort Bend County area. BVARC is a Non-Profit Corporation classified by IRS as 501-(c)-(3).

Today **BVARC** is truly a general interest amateur radio club with an impressive record of public service. The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) has recognized the club's commitment of service with the coveted status of Special Services Club. We are proud of our members who represent some of the finest in amateur radio. Membership is not limited to licensed operators, but is open to anyone with an interest in amateur radio. Club meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Sugar Land Community Center, 226 Matlege Way. General membership dues are \$20.00 per year, with student dues \$10.00 per year, additional family members \$2.00 per member per year and life membership \$160.00.

BVARC also administers amateur radio license exams on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the Houston Community College's Scarcella campus in Stafford. A Public Service Net is held each Monday at 8 p.m. on the 145.47 (minus offset, PL 123 tone) repeater & a rag chew net is held each Wednesday at 7 p.m. on 3910 KHz +/- 3 KHz.

To obtain information about joining **BVARC** or its activities, contact the club's "Elmer," Ross Lawler, W5HFF at 281-342-3340 or w5hff@yahoo.com or see the BVARC website: www.bvarc.org

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JUNE 2007

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

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

**BVARC Monthly Meeting – Thursday, June 14
Field Day, 2007 - June 23 & 24**

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