



BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

FEBRUARY 2015

VOLUME 39 ISSUE 2

BVARC FEBRUARY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

7:30 PM, Thursday, February 12, 2054

2511 Eldridge Rd, Sugar Land, 77478, Eldridge Park Conference Center

He May Not Look Like Flo but

The February meeting will have a BVARC member explaining the ins-and-outs about insurance for ham radio. Bob Hawkins, KD5AT, will bring his worldly expertise about the insurance world to the club and how it applies to ham radio operators, their equipment and associated equipment. With most active hams having around \$5,000 worth of equipment around at any given time (Alan, N5XZ, is one of the exceptions), insurance is something to be considered in case of theft or storm damage or even a fire.

So make sure you come to the meeting to find out just what the whole insurance thing is about and determine if insurance is really needed for that HW-100 or that Allied super regen receiver kit you built 46 years ago.



January/Banquet Meeting Recap – Lots of food and friends

The BVARC annual banquet was held at a new venue and that was a good thing. All the tables were full and packed (not just the members stomachs) and everyone had a great time. Not to steal anyone's thunder, a more detailed article is elsewhere in the newsletter.



Upcoming Meetings

And for a taste of what is coming up for future meetings, I have attached a short list. Mark your calendars now so you will not miss out on a fun and informative time.

March	Joint Meeting TDXS (pending)	presented by TDXS
April	Power Line Safety (confirmed)	presented by CenterPoint Energy
May	FCC and Amateur Radio (pending)	presented by Stephen Lee of the FCC
June	ARES, Hurricanes & Ham Radio (confirmed)	presented by Jeff Walter, KD5FGA

There are several other topics being worked on for future meetings that hopefully everyone will enjoy.

The Saltgrass System How to Chase DX Satellite Communications Contesting APRS

And don't forget:

Field Day Ice Cream Social Auction Chili Supper Homebrew Night

Don't miss out on the fun at the club meetings at BVARC!

73
N5VCX



From the President, Bill Stone, WS5H

Welcome to the BVARC News Letter

Our 1st quarter of 2015 is off to a nice start with the success of the BVARC Awards Banquet. For some it was a bit of navigation of Houston Galleria traffic to get there however at the banquet was of great fellowship, plentiful food, spacious seating tables and great service. See our web site for pictures of the banquet and also the award recipients.

Mike N5VCX our VP / program director has been busy lining out interesting meeting presentation topics for our 2015 meeting schedule Your new 2015 Board of Directors will begin the year with the Feb. BOD meeting and we have a full agenda to tackle for the new 2015 BOD members. See the list of 2015 BVARC BOD on our web site.

Our BVARC Greater Houston Hamfest for 2015 has planned a large leap from previous Hamfest's with the title of ARRL TEXAS Convention and the amazing list of rare speakers for the presentations. Our Hamfest is growing and so does the need for volunteers. See the BVARC web site for all the details on vendors. Demos, equipment check out table and other exciting news of the event. Also send an email to Nathan or Michael W. to volley up for help with GHH. The GHH chairman and co-chairman are doing magic for this event and need your help. YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS THIS HAMFEST.

The 10-10 Winter Phone QSO Party Feb 7th and 8th UTC will be again much fun with the BVARC BIG AL Challenge. Any new Hams with 10-meter capable radios will enjoy this QSO Party event. You do NOT need a 10-10 # to jump in and have some 10 meter fun. Details ask Nisar K0NM. Bob KD5AT is making plans to set a park 10-meter station for new hams without a HF radio in the Sugar Land area to get on the air for the event. Check our BVARC web site Club member roster for contact information. So much more BVARC good info for Feb and March in this news letter

A small glimpse into the 2nd quarter is Jerry KF5EYC Now changed his call to K9GEM and Cookie K5EWJ have submitted to BOD for appointment to be Chairman and are laying down the options / plans for the BVARC KK5W Museum Ship Weekend Event held the 1st weekend in June.

Last is, what's PREZ Bill been doing in the hobby of Amateur radio? As most know my passion is HF operations and DX chasing. Seems my country count has floundered with 225 DX countries on LOTW. I have enough DX cards for the DX card checker at our up coming Hamfest to boost that count over 228+ countries. Hey that reached my humble goal to have worked 2/3 of the world with my pea wee antenna setups and about 400 watts (350 watts 10 meter) output. My CW contacts were at only 100 watts. It just goes to prove that a non Big Gun station with some DX skills and patience can enjoy the DX chase. My new goal is ¾ of the world confirmed. As my log shows 268 countries I now am embarking on a new learning curve with CLUB LOG, OQRS and yes even the only direct QSL to far places like India and South China sea area. Ouch about 90 bucks for hopeful 25 return QSL. Enjoy the hobby.

73
Bill WS5H



Monday Night NET Updates

Don't forget the Monday Night Public Service Net starts at **8 pm** on 146.94 (167.9). 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:

10/13 - 24 - Rick, w5rh	11/17 - 31 - Ron, k5hm	12/22 - 27 - Pete, kd5qpx
10/20 - 21 - Ron, k5hm	11/24 - 23 - Pete, kd5qpx	12/29 - 28 - Mark, n5vcm
10/27 - 23 - Pete, kd5qpx	12/1 - 26 - Mark, n5vcm	1/5/2015 - 25 - Mark, n5vcm
11/3 - 42 - Bill, ws5h	12/8 - 26 - Mark, n5vcm	1/12 - 34 - Rick, w5rh
11/10 - 29 - Rick, w5rh	12/15 - 25 - Ron, k5hm	1/19 - 31 - Ron, k5hm



Please help me introduce our new Technicians to HF and contesting.

The Winter 10-10 contest is coming up on Feb 7 and Feb 8, 2015. Please consider joining me at Kitty Hollow Park in Missouri City at 8:00AM to not later than 5:00 PM to operate this contest. Kitty Hollow park offers a rather unique terrain feature for Fort Bend County. Where I grew up in Denton County, we called it a "hill". The Kitty Hollow "hill" rises about 20 feet above the surrounding plain and lake. The setting is perfect for a great day operating in the field.

We will reserve a pavilion with close by parking to enable power from your car. The Lord of weather and HF propagation has decreed Feb 8 to be a perfect day for making lots of ten meter contacts, indoctrinating new Techs into the ways of HF and contesting and generally having lots of field operations fun.

Please email me at bobhawkins1@gmail.com to let know that you are coming as I need a headcount to make sure there are enough radios and seasoned operators available to serve as elmers. Also, please let me know if you can bring a radio and or serve as an elmer.

Kitty Hollow Park during the October 2014 VHF Contest



Board Meeting – There was no board meeting in January.

Radiosport (?)

As a kid who grew up in New York City in the 50's, I always wanted to say, "Good afternoon sports fans, this is Mel Allen coming to you from Yankee Stadium." "Along with my sidekick the Old Redhead Red Barber, we'll be calling the game today."

I've just always wanted to say that. Well, that has nothing to do with contesting or does it? Can you imagine the sharp tongues of Mel Allen and Red Barber calling the play by play in the last World Radio Team Championships ?



Photo by K5JU

Although Ham Radio and baseball may be as far apart as a 3Z500 power tube and a golf ball, this aspect of our hobby has become a sport. During the WRTC, they even had a real time scoreboard system on the web. So since Mel and Red are long gone to the eternal World Series in the sky, who will call the game at the next WRTC?

Imagine Gordon West in his tuxedo, calling the play by play action on live streaming video. "The action's is pretty intense as the 9A team from Croatia just logged a couple of critical multipliers here late in the action and it appears, they have moved into medal position for now." "Over to you, Bob."



There's Hamnation's commentator Bob Heil, in his Hawaiian shirt with microphone in hand, doing the in-depth analysis. Whispering into his personalized gold plated Heil RC35 Signature model, "Yes Gordo it looks like the Swedish team has made a strategic error holding onto the gray line propagation too long. Meantime, the Russians, seem to have a little wiring problem. They'll be playing catch up tonight."

Ah yes, sounds just like Yankee Stadium, doesn't it? But no crowd noise. In this era of live video feeds, the very essence of what makes contest radio a sport is missing! Let's have some crowd noise next time!. A little basic crowd noise with variable amplitude when things get hot; the voice of the peanut vendor in the background for reality.

Next thing you know, the Las Vegas sports books will be giving odds on the CQ World Wide action.

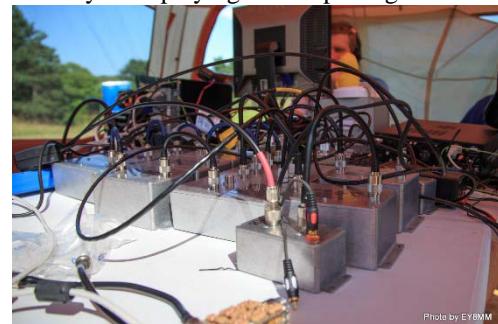


Photo by EYBMM

Reporting from the Dark Side,
Ron, K5HM



Greater Houston Hamfest – March 28, 2015 Tables almost sold out

As this issue goes to press, only 22 tables of about 200 remain. Clearly we will have a sell out. Get yours now, on-line. Also, remember that with pre-registration, admission is \$8 (vs. \$10 at the door) plus you get 2 prize tickets and access to the VIP expedited entrance. The website is mostly updated and additional information is uploaded as soon as known. If you haven't volunteered to help during the preparation (between now and the event) or during the event, please do so as that is the greatest limitation in making this happen. Contact the new Chairperson, Nathan Vessey, N5NYV, at għhamfest@att.net or (c) 832-603-1535.

Go to the Greater Houston Hamfest website at: www.houstonhamfest.org



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Easy up – Remote Listening – Rick-W5RH

Have you ever wanted to listen to a net on HF or 2 meters, but you have to walk the dog or go to the grocery store? If so, here is a simple way to remote listen to your shack radio using your land-line house phone and your cell phone.

Simply.....

- 1) Turn on your shack radio and dial up the frequency you want to listen to. Plug in your headphones.
- 2) Put your house phone mouthpiece on your headphone ear piece. [Remember the Bell 103 Modems with the acoustic coupler? Same thing, but I put a rubber band around mine to hold the two together.]
- 3) Dial your cell phone number from your home phone.
- 4) Answer your cell phone [mute microphone and put it on speaker].
- 5) Then adjust both the radio volume into your headphones and your cell phone speaker volume to get a good balance. Do not overdrive the radio end as digital voice distorts in a very bad way when too loud.
- 6) You are all set! Go walk the dog, as you happily listen to the net now being broadcast over your cell phone. Oh, don't forget to hang up the house phone upon your return home.

Of course, this is not a 2-way link, but it will allow you to at least listen.

If it's a 2M net and you happen to have a 2M HT, you can listen (and talk) with that, but trying to carry your HF transceiver and the 80 meter antenna on a dog walk is a bit tough. This system works great for that!

**Results of the January 13th
BVARC Amateur License Examination Session**
by: John Moore, KK5NU

B-VARC sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio License Examination session that was held on Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at HCC's Scarcella Science & Technology Building here in Stafford, TX.

MEMBERS OF THE VE TEAM:

John Moore, KK5NU
George Ontko, KM5VP
Robert B. Tomlinson, N5JSI

Four examination elements were administered during the evening to four applicants. Three new Technician class and one upgrade to General class license were attained, with the total number of elements passed being 4. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was 100%.

Congratulations to the following who attained a license and/or passed an exam:

Donald G. Johnson	- {KG5FNF}	- Technician
Ernest K. Keith, Jr.	- KG5FEM	- General
Kathy F. Keith	- {KG5FNG}	- Technician
Pollachi Narayan		
Sankara Narayana	- {KK6RKT}	- Technician

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 everyone at HCC Scarcella Science & Technology Building for making these excellent classroom facilities available to us for our exams each month.

..... 73



**Have you volunteered to help with the Greater Houston Hamfest?
We need as much help of any level of ability as possible. Contact
this year's Chairperson, Nathan Vessey, N5NYV, at
ghhamfest@att.net or (c) 832-603-1535.**

BVARC Historical Vignettes – The Founding of BVARC

Allen Mattis N5AFV, Club Historian

BVARC was founded in 1977 and this year our club will be 38 years old. Most of the current members of BVARC know little about how our club originated. I joined BVARC in 1985 and was privileged to know many of the charter members who founded our club. Ed Harwell, W5WVX, was one of the charter members and I worked with him for almost a decade as a volunteer in Fort Bend County Emergency Management. Ed shared with me some of the events that took place when BVARC was founded.

One day in the fall of 1977, Tom Casey, WA5ACF, and Ed Harwell, W5WVX, were talking on 2-meters and discovered that they both lived in Fort Bend County and they both had a common interest in emergency communications. Tom immediately drove over to Ed's house to continue their conversation. Ed and Tom decided to have a meeting with other ham radio operators to discuss the possibility of starting a group to provide emergency communications for Fort Bend County. Tom made a few telephone calls, and secured a meeting room in the Westbury United Methodist Church, located in southwest Houston at the corner of Bellfort Street and Willowbend Drive.

This organizational meeting was held at the Westbury United Methodist Church on Friday, September 16, 1977. The church happens to be located in my neighborhood several blocks from my house, and whenever I pass by the church I often think of the founding of BVARC.



BVARC's Birthplace – Westbury United Methodist Church in Meyerland

The BVARC records do not contain a list of the attendees, but we do know that Roger Cody, N5FN, the ARRL Emergency Coordinator for Brazoria County was present at the meeting. Tom Casey, Ed Harwell and the other amateur radio operators who gathered at the meeting wanted to start an ARES related group. Roger Cody explained that ARES was a service and not an organization, and that the group might consider forming a club or

organization. The group immediately decided to form an amateur radio club, and it was agreed to meet two weeks later and elect officers of the new club.



Educational wing of Westbury United Methodist Church where BVARC was founded

The first officers of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club were elected at a meeting held on Friday, September 30, 1977 at the Missouri City Fire Station. The officers were President Jerry Albright, WB5HQU, Vice President Wade Eilers, WN5TEN, Secretary Tim Rosen, WB5SGU, Treasurer Dale Williams, WD5AJC, and Activities Manager Ed Harwell, W5WVX. Tom Casey, WA5ACF, applied for and was appointed to the position of ARRL Emergency Coordinator for Fort Bend County.

The Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club was off and running. The club immediately started a Monday night emergency net, the forerunner of our present day Public Service Net. The first club newsletter was published in March, 1978. That newsletter indicated that the club was already holding a Novice License Class for new hams, and the club roster listed 25 members.

It was observed more than once in the early days of the club that a number of attempts had previously been made to start an amateur radio club in Fort Bend County, but none of these clubs had lasted very long. What was different this time? Why did BVARC succeed where others had failed? Whatever the reasons, all BVARC members can be proud of our club's heritage. BVARC has had a 38-year history of contributing to and serving the amateur radio community of Fort Bend and Harris Counties.

I thank Ed Harwell, W5WVX, for providing me with information about the earliest days of our club. BVARC records contain a copy of a letter written in 1992 in which Ed describes the genesis of BVARC and congratulates the club on its fifteenth birthday. Ed Harwell, W5WVX, is now retired and lives in Tyler, Texas.

THE BVARC Rag Chew Net

January Check-ins

12/24/14, K5LKJ (NCS), AF5T, W5TOM, W5HFF, W5TKZ, WS5H, KF5TFJ, AA5OA, WN5A. (9 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 151, SN = 128, A = 15, K = 3

12/31/14, K5LKJ (NCS), W5TKZ, KF5TFJ, W5HFF, WN5A, W5TOM, AA5OA, K5IZO, WS5H. (9 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 133, SN = 102, A = 10, K = 2

01/07/15, K5LKJ (NCS), W5TKZ, W5TOM, AF5T, AA5OA, W5HFF, KE5OBY, WN5A, KF5TFJ, WS5H.
(10 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 145, SN = 102, A = 13, K = 2

01/14/15, K5LKJ (NCS), K5MLD (Baton Rouge, LA), KK5IS, AA5OA, KF5TFJ, W5JZQ (Leesville, LA),
W5HFF, W5TOM, W5TKZ, KE5OBY (R), K5IZO, AF5T, KA5HZV (Putnam), K0NM, KF5PHA, WN5A,
AA0ST (Dickenson), WS5H.

(18 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 155, SN = 93, A = 8, K = 1

01/21/15, K5LKJ (NCS), W5HFF, W5TOM, KF5TFJ, W5TKZ, AA5OA, WN5A, KE5OBY (R), KA5HZV
(Putnam), WA5KXG, K5IZO, N5JSL, KF5PHA, AA0ST (Dickenson), WS5H, KK5IS, W5RH, KF5OXF
(Needville). (18 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 123, SN = 57, A = 4, K = 3

(M) = mobile (P) = Portable (R) = Relay (RCS) = remote controlled station (T) = telephone check-in

Come join in the conversation each Wednesday evening. Regards. John K5LKJ



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The Radio Hotel - The Antenna – Part 1 - Introduction by W5RH

I heard N5XZ say the other day that the most important part of a Ham Radio station is the antenna. I couldn't agree more. It's similar to the old adage; rather a master carpenter with poor tools than a novice carpenter with the best tools. Give me great antennas and it does not matter that I am QRP at 5 watts or barefoot at 100 watts, I will work many more stations than if I was 1000 watts and an end fed long wire at 10 feet.

One reason, I will hear much more with the better antenna. We typically listen more than we transmit. So, it is not just transmit we are trying to improve, it is the receive side of things also. Lucky for us that antennas exhibit reciprocity. They say, if you can't hear um, you can't work'um. Better antennas provide stronger receive signals, less noise, appropriate main lobe launch angles, and, through directionality, maximum station rejection, noise rejection, etc. Of course, all this depends on how the antenna is designed and/or configured. It is an excellent attribute for you, when working with antennas, to understand what makes them tick. Find out why they work, how they work and from there, you can best figure out how to deploy them to get the best performance out of them. Local, regional or DX work – they all have different requirements.

Now, I understand, sometimes you are not able to do much....nothing wrong with the above referenced end fed longwire at 10 feet, if that is all you can put up. Look on the positive side – it is outside, and not folded into some multi-sided quadrangle looking like a piece of mis-understood modern art in your attic. Being outside, in itself, has a bit of gain associated with it. If that is what you have, then make the best of it. Maybe use more power or see what bands are the better bands for you. Also, try the various modes to see which one works best for you. You can still have tons of fun.

However, just because you can't put up a 4 element SteppIR at 75 feet does not mean that you don't need to know how antennas work. It is even more important that you understand antenna systems when you are in such a critical situation, because then you can think through your given situation and apply all of your antenna knowledge in getting the best performance out of the area that you have to use. In QST in 1925, W.H. Murphy stated that "*The average amateur has simply got to fit his antenna into his space. Just what makes the best antenna does not concern him very much. He is only interested in 'what makes the best antenna within my space'*". Still holds true today, but in order to place the best antenna into your space, I recommend that you know how antennas work.

Next month: **The Antenna - Part 2 - The Recipe**

*The purpose of **The Radio Hotel** is to give you a practical kickstart into exploring the workings of antenna systems. It is a series, so go back and read the previous columns to get the whole picture, as one month relies on the previous month's information . Google the buzz words and find out what they mean. Read up on antenna system theory to see how it all works together. You will be glad you did.*



2015 Club Officers:

President:
Bill Stone, WS5H
dragntow@wt.net

Vice President:
Michael Hardwick, N5VCX
n5vcx@att.net

Corresponding Secretary
Stephanie Vessey K5SFV

Treasurer
Robert Tomlinson, N5JSL
rbtswim@gmail.com

Recording Secretary:
Michael Monsour, AC0TX
msirc@wildflower.net

2 Year At-Large Board Member A:
Jerry Muller, KF5EYC
gmuller885@aol.com

2 Year At-Large Board Member B:
Scott Medbury KD5FBA

1 Year Past President Board Member
Darrell Kirk KC5JAR

Club Happenings:

General Meeting

Second Thursday each month, 7:30 PM
2511 Eldridge Rd, Sugar Land, 77478, Eldridge Park Conference Center (Check page 1)

Board of Directors Meeting

First Thursday of each month, 7:00 PM
Bayland Park Community Center
Bayland Park, 6400 Bissonnet,

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
jwm@hal-pc.org

Eating Schedule

See in adjacent column.

Rag Chew Net

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

Public Service Net

Monday night on 146.94 (167.9) at 8:00 PM

Advertising in the BVARC Newsletter

Rates are as follows; \$25 per month for 1/2 page, \$125 for six months and \$250 for one year. The rates for a full page are as follows; \$50 per month, \$250 for six months and \$500 for the year.



BVARC EATING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

IHOP, 7:00a.m., SW Freeway inbound service road, near Kirkwood.

NEW YORK COFFEE & BAGEL SHOP, 7:30a.m., 9720 Hillcroft.

OTHER HAM GROUPS:

WEDNESDAYS – WEDNESDAY LUNCH BUNCH

LUBY'S CAFETERIA, 10:30a.m. to 12:00 Noon +, South Post Oak Road, just south of the I-610 Loop in Meyer Park Shopping Center.

WEDNESDAYS – AMSAT & QRP GROUP

PAPPAS BARBECUE. 11:30a.m., SW corner Westheimer & Gessner.



Hamfests

(within 200 miles of Houston)

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

02/13/2015 Houston Vintage Radio Association [HVRA] is holding their convention and auction, Feb 13 Friday and Feb 14 Saturday. See <http://www.hvra.org> for details.

02/28/2015 | Orange Hamfest 2015

Location: Orange, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Orange Amateur Radio Club & Jefferson County Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://www.qsl.net/w5nd/>

03/28/2015 | Texas State Convention (Greater Houston Hamfest)

Location: Rosenberg, TX

Type: ARRL Convention

Sponsor: Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

Website: <http://www.houstonhamfest.org/>



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Editor: John Chauvin, K5IZO, k5izo@yahoo.com
Production Team: Cameron Mitchell, K5CAM, k5cam@arrl.net

Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club (BVARC) was organized in 1977, 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 Eldridge Park Conference Center, 2511 Eldridge Rd, Sugar Land, 77478,
... General membership dues are \$25.00 per year, with student dues \$10.00 per year, additional family members \$5.00 per member per year and life membership \$250.00.

BVARC also administers amateur radio license exams on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 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 146.94 (minus offset, PL 167.9 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 w5hoff@yahoo.com or see the BVARC website: www.bvarc.org

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FEBRUARY 2015

**BRAZOS VALLEY
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FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

February General Membership Meeting – February 12

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