



# BVARC BEACON



**Newsletter of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club  
AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY**

**NOVEMBER 2019**

**VOLUME 43 ISSUE 11**

## **BVARC NOVEMBER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

Thursday, November 14th, 2019 7:30pm, at the Imperial Park Sugarland Recreation Center at 234 Matlage Way, Sugar Land TX, 77478 – It's right across the street from the Post Office

It'll be the annual Chili Supper meeting – along with club elections. Hone up on your best chili recipe (beans or no-beans) and bring a pot out to the meeting for all to enjoy!

**Club elections.** The club can't be a success without your involvement. If you have not held an officer or director position (at all or in the last few years) please step up and help out. The following positions are open: President, Treasurer, Directors (one year at-large & 2-year at large). The two year at large position had been vacated by Jo Keener KE7NSB (who is now net control of a 2 meter net in heaven).



## **Report on the October General Membership Meeting**

We had a rare field trip to the Transtar facility (the Harris County EOC) on Old Katy Road just inside the 610 loop. The tour was well attended and included members of Echo and the Katy ARCs.

We were split into two groups and toured through the main EOC - emergency operations communications/coordination room:



We toured through the Amateur radio room/shack and to the deck over the main traffic observation and control room:



We learned that this is one of the few and premier emergency management (and traffic management) facilities in the world. It manages 7 counties and gathers data to the extent of Dallas, San Antonio, Galveston and the east Texas border. The facility coordinates responses through the shared resources of the City of Houston, Harris County, Metro and TxDOT for any disaster – except volcanos and earthquakes. It was quite interesting to see, especially the wall of QSL cards outside the ham room.



## The Prez Says

The year is quickly coming to an end. With winter coming up (can we say 70 degrees!) it is time for the BVARC annual chili supper and club elections. That means we need you, as club members, to keep the club running. This election the slate of open positions are:

President – 2-year Term  
Recording Secretary – 2-year Term  
Treasurer – 2-year Term  
Two Year Director – 2-year Term  
Two Year Director – 2-year Term  
One Year Director – 1-year Term

Rick Hiller, W5RH is coordinating the election so if you are interested in helping, let him know. Help BVARC so BVARC can keep helping amateur radio.

Don't forget the BVARC annual Chili Supper at the November meeting. Daphne Rawlinson, K5VQY and Kelli Medbury, KG5QJE will be putting the supper together so please let them know if you will be bringing chili.

Get ready for the BVARC banquet coming up in January (date and time to be announced next month). It will be held this year at the Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet. In an effort to cut back club expenses, it was decided to have the banquet at the community center since it is available at no cost. Dinner will be provided by No Small Affair Caterers. Check the newsletter next month for the banquet pricing and details.

Also don't forget the awards presented at the banquet for outstanding service for the club. The awards: The Loop and Zepp; Dr. Bill and the Order of the Key are presented to club members that show outstanding service in HF operation, being a volunteer examiner and general service to the club. If you have an idea for someone for one of the awards, contact anyone on the board and let them know.

If you missed it, too bad. The tour went very well of the tour of one of the largest traffic control and emergency centers of this type in the United States. It is amazing that the city, county, state and transportation agencies have come together to develop this system of monitoring and control that benefits an area of 6 million people.

Hopefully to stir activity on the 94 repeater, there has been a request to bring back the over-the-air swap net. For many years, Ms Dorothy was Net Control on the Thursday night swap net. If you interested having it back, send me an e-mail at [n5vcx@att.net](mailto:n5vcx@att.net).

Also don't forget the ARRL CW Sweepstakes on November 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 4<sup>th</sup>.

Hope to see everyone at the Chili Supper.

73,  
N5VCX

# BVARC Elections – November Meeting

## For the BVARC Board of Directors

### Positions open

- President – 2 year term**
- Recording Secretary – 2 year term**
- Treasurer – 2 year term**
- 2 Year At Large – 2 year term**
- 2 Year at Large – 2 year term**
- 1 Year at Large – 1 year term**

**Please consider filling one of the offices above. Step on up! There are many members that have not served in any capacity in helping run the club. *[Please note that there are also those that have done multiple terms and many years of service.]* Please consider running for an office.**

**If you have questions about any of the offices and their responsibilities, you can refer to the BVARC By-Laws (on the web site) or contact me. I'd be pleased to answer any query. There will be open nominations from the floor at the November meeting – “Elections and Chili Supper night”. See you then.**

**Rick Hiller – W5RH – 832-474-3713 rickhiller73@gmail.com**



### Where in the World is . . .

As this issue goes to press, this article is not available. Please look for it to return in the next issue.



### BVARC Monday Night Public Service Net Updates

Don't forget the BVARC Monday Night Net starts at **8 pm** on 146.94 (167.9). The order of check-ins starts 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 Rick, w5rh, if you are interested. Here are recent check-ins with control-ops:

7/15 - 13 - Dave, k5ekw	9/2 - 13 - Dave, k5ekw	9/30 - 27 - Dave, k5ekw
7/22 - 15 - Clint, kf5ndf	9/9 - 18 - Richard, kg5ycu	10/7 - 20 - Dave, k5ekw
8/5 - 19 - Dave, k5ekw	9/16 - 22 - Dave, k5ekw	10/14 - 25 Richard, kg5ycu
8/25 - 15 - Clint, kf5ndf	9/23 - 20 - Clint, kf5nd	10/21 - 21 - Richard, kg5ycu

### BVARC QUICK STATS

Date	Total Membeship	Newsletters	Life Members
10/27/2019	201	200	71

# Review: The Ming He LC200A L/C Meter

by Rick Hiller – W5RH

I used my trusty AADE\* LC meter during the construction of the coils for the K2MPP Shortened 80 Mx Dipole article. Measuring the coil L values caught the attention of Jon, KF5TFJ, so, at the next iHOP breakfast he handed me a Ming He LC200A LC meter and asked if I would measure a few things and see if it was accurate, etc. Jon and the tongue measuring Ming He (pic right).

Nice instrument for HF work. Works well. Every Ham should have one at \$39. (See Amazon.com) It has a very wide range of measurement for both L and C. L is .01 uH to 100H and C is from .1pF to 1 F. Within 5% accuracy.

One nice thing is that it is a dynamic measuring device. Connect the part under test (i.e. a variable capacitor) and vary. The measured value tracks the changing capacitor value in real time. Runs on 4 AA batteries. Comes with alligator test leads and a 8 page manual.

\*Note: My favorite \$99, AADE meter is no longer in production.



## October VE - FCC TESTING SESSION RESULTS

For the Saturday's October 5th test session: We had 5 candidates.

### New Licensees:

Park, A. (Technician)  
Sciba, J. (Technician)  
Stevens W. (Technician)

### Upgrades

K15GKU (General)

Congratulations to all!

A great thank you to the VEs in attendance – K5LJ, N5DTT, and K5IZO.

Of these testing candidates – **FOUR** are a new BVARC members!

In other VE news, here's an article about local VE Franz Laugermann (K3FL) and the 1,000 exam session milestone he set in 2018:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/view/texas-volunteer-examiner-setting-sights-on-next-1-000-exam-sessions>

Although Franz was recognized a year ago for his accomplishment, I learned from Franz that the ARRL plaque arrived just recently.

Examination sessions are held each month, usually on the same day as the Saturday BVARC Board meeting.

These sessions are at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St., Houston TX 77074

Details for candidates are found at [www.bvarc.org/home/amateur-license/](http://www.bvarc.org/home/amateur-license/)

Call Mark Janzer, K5MGJ at (832) 875-0526 or eMail: [k5mgj@yahoo.com](mailto:k5mgj@yahoo.com) to pre-register.

# Cutting Through the Static – A Column for Newbies

JP Pritchard, K5JPP

## QRP – Whispering into the Ethers

QRP is a CW abbreviation for “Decrease power, or should I decrease power.” Of course, it’s still used that way, but it also designates a segment of users who transmit at reduced power while attempting to maximize effective range. Low power is usually defined as five watts or less, but those who opt for SSB operating may sometimes go as high as ten watts. There’s also a segment of QRP operators who call themselves “milliwatters,” designated as QRPP, limiting their power to one watt or less.

QRP is very challenging on the one hand, because successful communications require a good bit of skill, and the use of efficient antennas. At the same time, there’s a big payoff, as it offers up some wonderful adventures.

QRPer often build their own equipment, including transmitters, receivers and antennas. And there are kits galore available from internet sellers. For the newbie, there are kits that can be built without a great deal of expertise. You might have to sharpen your soldering skills a little, but there’s a never-ending list of instructional YouTube videos on the web to help you with that.

Indeed, QRP is a hobby where you don’t have to do it alone. BVARC Vice President Mark Janzer is an avid QRPer and he suggests finding a QRP club to join. There are plenty of them on the Internet where you can learn a lot and even get help when you need it. They don’t have to be local to provide the help you may need.

Janzer offered up a short list of clubs he recommends. They include, Four State QRP Group, Northern California QRP, North America QRP CW Club, NoGa (North Georgia) and the Adventure Radio Society, sponsor of the monthly Spartan Sprint.

If you have a grasp of CW, you might want to check out the Spartan Sprint, since participants often achieve amazing results using homemade radios that weigh not pounds, but ounces.

Lightweight gear is a key part of the QRP hobby since many hams love to operate from remote locations, especially hill and mountain tops in a contest category known as SOTA (Summits on the Air) The weight of your gear matters since nobody wants to carry more weight (including a battery) than they have to when schlepping it up a hill or to some other remote location.

It’s far piece to a Texas mountaintop, but we do have a few spots in the eastern half of the state that qualify, including a favorite near Lufkin, and several more in the Texas Hill Country. What could be better, spending time operating in the beauty of natural Texas?

QRP operators have a lot of options to pursue, not only in their choice of radios, but also for antennas. There are a variety of commercial portable antennas available, some as simple as a metal pole and others that are configurable in multiple ways. Gizmo lovers may get a kick out of the polymorphous options that come in a canvas bag, But if you’re going someplace where there are trees, it’s hard to beat an old fashioned wire dipole, or some variation of that.

But QRP isn’t just hills and mountaintops. A lot of operators stay snugly home in the comfort of heating and air conditioning, and that kind of operation obviously provides you with more antenna options. In the immortal words of Hank Williams, “If you’ve got the money honey,” you might want to get yourself a tower and a nice beam. That’s the most effective way to operate at less than ten watts.

Much of what happens in QRP is in the HF bands and largely off limits to those with a Technician license, but It’s also practiced in the VHF range. It is more challenging there, but many QRP enthusiasts will agree to the use of up to 10 watts for six meters and above.

If you’re not into kit building, there are several commercial rigs available, specifically designed for QRP operations. They include, but are not limited to the following:

The Yaesu FT-817 818 covering frequencies from HF through 70 cm. The old standby mobile/base Yaesu FT-857D is a 100-watt transceiver but is easily dialed back to five or ten watts. ICOM offers the IC-703, available not only as an HF rig but also in a 6 meters version. MFJ even offers two single-band transceivers, the MFJ 9406X 6M SSB rig with 7 watts output and the MFJ 9402X 2M SSB rig with 10 watts output. There are used rigs available as well, on eBay, eHam, QRZ.com, etc., and also at some future hamfest.

QRP radio sounds like fun to me. If it works for you, why not give it a shot?

# The Radio Hotel – Dissecting Series #4

## What's Inside the SteppIR Vertical?

by Rick W5RH

Occasionally the club has equipment donated to it. Recently, Bob Malley, K4KKA, donated a SteppIR Small Vertical system. I received this thru the antenna and make sure that all was functioning properly so we can use it for our events like Museum ships or Field Day. After

from Mike, VCX, and told him that I would go a bit of repair, it is working well.

The SteppIR Small Vertical (Pic 1) covers 20 meters thru 6 meters with automatic frequency adjustment. It consists of a copper-beryllium tape powered by a motor. The motor is controlled by the shack located band coverage capability with the addition enclosure (Pic 4) and placed electrically in required, of course.

meters thru 6 meters with automatic fiberglass vertical tube inside of which moves and sprocket wheel in the base unit (Pic 2). control unit (Pic 3). 40 meters is added to the of a base loading coil contained in a separate series with the main vertical system. Radials



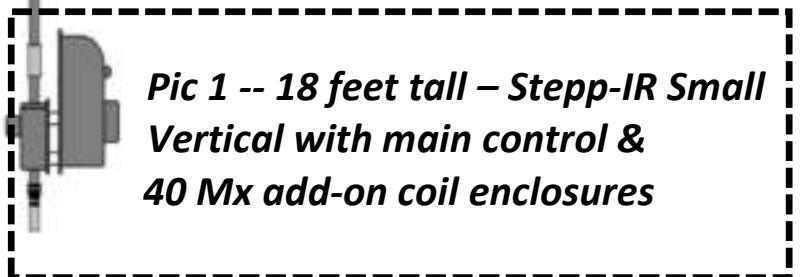
Pic 2 -- Main Control Unit with Cu tape reel



Pic 4 -- 40 Mx Loading Coil Add-on



Pic 3 -- Control Unit Front Panel



Pic 1 -- 18 feet tall – Stepp-IR Small Vertical with main control & 40 Mx add-on coil enclosures

**November Meeting Show and Tell.** I will have this “new to BVARC” vertical system on display and opened up at the November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. You’ll be able to see the internal workings of the system and how it is set up.

Enjoy your hobby. 73...Rick – W5RH

**Next time.... All I Want For Christmas**

*The purpose of **The Radio Hotel** is to give you a practical kickstart into exploring the workings of antenna systems. 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.*

**MINUTES**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club**

October 5, 2019 9:00 AM  
Bayland Park Community Center  
6400 Bissonnet, Houston, Texas

Board Members Present:  
Mike Hardwick N5VCX (President)\*  
Mark Janzer K5MGJ (Vice President)

Jon Noxon KF5TFJ (Rec. Secretary)  
Jeff Greer W5JEF (Cor. Secretary)  
Donovan Bali KG5BDZ (Treasurer)\*

Michael Monsour AC0TX (Director 2Yr)  
Jimmy Vance NA5D (Director 1yr)  
Scott Medbury KD5FBA (Director 2 yr)

Recorded by Jon Noxon, KF5TFJ Recording Secretary

- 1) Call to Order: The Vice President called the meeting to order at 9:06. President present via Telecon.
- 2) Establishment of Quorum: A business quorum was established. (Eight of eight officers and board members present in person or by teleconference)
- 3) Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved
- 4) Club President's Opening Statement: The President thanked those present for attending the meeting.
- 5) Emergency Business: None
- 6) Approval of Minutes from Previous BOD Meeting: The Board approved the minutes for the previous BoD meeting.
- 7) Approval of Treasurer's Report: The Board approved the Treasurer's Report,
- 8) Corresponding Secretary: (verbal report) Membership renewal received via mail. QSL cards continue to be received. Membership check received.
- 9) Old Business:

General Membership Meetings scheduled as follows, with topics not listed to be determined:  
October 10, 2019 - TranStar field trip.  
November 14, 2019 - Chili Supper and club elections. Kelli and Daphne on point to coordinate.  
December 12, 2019 - Home Brew/Makers Night.

Discussion regarding the January Club Awards Banquet. Speaker to be selected. Corresponding Sec. will attempt to recruit Forrest Mimms to speak.

Status of donations to Stewart (A/C and electrical improvements). Emphasis needed to get Cavalla antennas working. Mobilization party to be determined.

Topics suggested for future meetings:  
Raspberry Pi and Linux programming.  
SDR radio receivers.  
Antenna modeling.
- 10) New Business:

For GHHF, will share FBC Fair Grounds with Innovation-Spark (the term "Maker's Faire" cannot be used due to legal problems. Event tentatively called **Greater Houston Ham Fest and I-Spark Convention**. Coordination is ongoing with Mike Hardwick taking the lead. Board approved reimbursement of Treasurer for out of pocket expenses of \$292 benefiting BVARC (insurance and other items).
- 11) Cost Saving Measures:

Status Continue looking into this on an on-going item.; Storage Locker is the remaining major expenses. Banquet costs will be reduced with selection Sharon Moore to cater the banquet. Suggestion to reduce Beacon issue to bi-monthly discouraged by the President.
- 12) Next BOD meeting date:, Nov. 9 2019  
Future BoD dates: Dec 7 2019 (Possible conflict with Pearl Harbor Event @ Stewart, if we do it)
- 13) Comments:
- 14) Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 10:16 am

\*Board members present Via Teleconference



## BVARC Rag Chew Net

Below is the BVARC Rag Chew Net check-in information:

09/25/19, K5LKJ (NCS), K5LJ, WW5PA, K2MPP, W5TKZ, W1BG (Katy), W5VOM, AA5OA (Fort Smith, AR) (T), W5RH, K5IZO/5 (Jasper)(P), N4AOW (Chattanooga, TN), AA0ST (Dickinson), KG5SXG, KF5PHA, KC3NAB.

(15 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 67, SN = 0, A = 8, K = 1 / Band Rpt: Fair

10/02/19, K5LKJ (NCS), K5JPP, N5OJB (Gonzales), W1BG (Katy), K5LJ, K2MPP, KE5SR (Gainesville, FL), W5TKZ, KD5CDM, W5VOM, W5TOM, N5EKW (Katy), AA0ST (Dickinson), W5RH, WA5ANF (T), KD5PVP (Friendswood), (16 Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 68, SN = 0, A = 13, K = 3 / Band Rpt: Good

10/09/19, K5LKJ (NCS), K2MPP, W5TKZ, K5LJ, W5VOM, N5EKW (Katy), WW5PA, W5RH, WA5CYI, N5FQS (Conroe), KJ5Y (RCS)(W5FMH/club) (Angleton), KG5WPE. (14 Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 68, SN = 0, A = 6, K = 2 / Band Rpt: Good

10/16/19, K5LKJ (NCS), K2MPP, AA5OA (Fort Smith, AR), WW5PA, K5LJ, W5TKZ, KG5SXG, W1BG (Katy), KG5WPE, WA5ANF (T). (11) Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 66, SN = 0, A = 6, K = 0 / Band Rpt: Good

10/23/19, K5LKJ (NCS), K2MPP, K5JPP, K5IZO/5 (Jasper)(P), W5VOM, W5TKZ, W5EAT (Livingston), K5LJ, N5EKW (Katy), W5TOM, AA0ST (Dickinson). (15 Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 66, SN = 0, A = 6, K = 2 / Band Rpt: Fair

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

Net conditions have been fair to good this month. Learn what others are doing.

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



### Hamfests

(typically within 200 miles of Houston)

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

#### 01/10/2020 | [Radio Fiesta 2020](#)

**Location:** Schertz, TX

**Type:** ARRL Hamfest

**Sponsor:** San Antonio Radio Club

**Website:** <http://w5sc.org>

#### 03/06/2020 | [Greater Houston HamFest](#)

**Location:** Rosenberg, TX

**Type:** ARRL Hamfest

**Sponsor:** Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

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



# BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

This newsletter, the BVARC BEACON, is a monthly publication of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club. For a full listing of officers and information about BVARC, please go to [www.bvarc.org](http://www.bvarc.org). Detailed information will be published in the BEACON every 3 or 4 months. Similarly, the "Eating Schedule" will be published every 3 or 4 months unless there is a change.

General membership dues are \$25.00 per year, with student dues \$10.00 per year, additional family members \$5.00 per member per year.

Club meetings are normally held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Sugar Land Masonic Lodge, 421 Eldridge Rd, Sugar Land, 77478. Check the above website for any possible changes.

**BVARC** amateur radio testing has resumed. It takes place typically on the Saturday before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 10:30 AM. Location: Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, 77074. BEFORE GOING, please check the BVARC website for any changes.

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, see the BVARC website: [www.bvarc.org](http://www.bvarc.org)

Other contacts include:

President:, Mike Hardwick, N5VCX, [n5vcx@att.net](mailto:n5vcx@att.net)

Newsletter Editor, John Chauvin, K5IZO, [k5izo@yahoo.com](mailto:k5izo@yahoo.com)

Newsletter Printing, Assembly and Mailing: Daphne Rawlinson, K5VQY, [daphne\\_rawlinson@hotmail.com](mailto:daphne_rawlinson@hotmail.com).

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JP Pritchard, K5JPP, [jppnews@comcast.net](mailto:jppnews@comcast.net); Esther Pritchard, [elop@comcast.net](mailto:elop@comcast.net)

NOTE: Officers, advertising and eating schedule are on the website. They will only be published in the Newsletter every few months.

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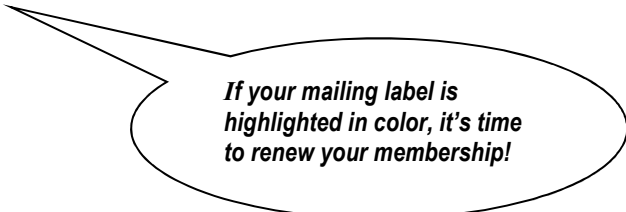
NOVEMBER 2019

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

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FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

**November 14, BVARC General Membership Meeting (Chili Supper & Elections)**



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