



BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY

MAY 2015

VOLUME 39 ISSUE 5



BVARC MAY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

7:30 PM, Thursday, May 14th, 2015

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

ARES – The Inner Workings with Transtar

It may not be Mission Control but it is close to. If you are not aware of it, there is a group city, county, state and federal agencies that are in a building off Old Katy Road that has several rooms set up to oversee the major emergencies and disasters in and around Harris County. Right in the middle of this space age command and control is, you guessed it, a ham radio room. So come to the meeting and listen to Jeff Walter, KE5FGA, the ARRL ARES South Texas EC describe the interfacing between ARES and Transtar and workings of the ham radio room at Transtar. Prepare to be amazed.



April Meeting Recap – Hotdogs were cooked but no one ate them

Centerpoint Energy did an excellent power line safety program as well as telling how NOT to cook our hotdogs (or ourselves). Nearly 50 people attended the demonstration and discussion on power line safety and the do's and don'ts on working around power lines. So please keep in mind what Centerpoint told us on how to install antennas safely can correctly.



Upcoming Meetings

Below is a list of the plans for future meetings. Mark your calendars so you will not miss out.

June	Program #1	BVARC/TDXS/ECHO Field Day	presented by BVARC FD chairman
	Program #2	Greater Houston Hamfest Wrap-up	
July	Program #1	Antenna Building – The In's and Out's	pending
	Program #2	Grounding	pending

If there is a program you would like, let me know so we can get it scheduled for a BVARC meeting.

Come on out to the BVARC meeting for a good time!

73
N5VCX



The Vice Prez Says

Bill, WS5H, is still out enjoying a relaxing vacation so I am filling in for him for the monthly newsletter article. Bill did tell me to tell everyone he is not a “comatoasted Prez” and he is ready to chat on BVARC affairs. Of course I sent him an e-mail and said “ I always thought you were comatoasted”. Bill did say hi to everyone at the club and he is hoping to be back in the saddle, so to speak, shortly. As per Bill’s wishes, I would not call or e-mail Bill just yet since he is still on the radioactive and chemo highway. Let’s everyone think positive thoughts about Bill and on the road and he has to travel.

Museum Ship Weekend (MSWE) for the submarine USS Cavalla and destroyer escort USS Stewart is coming up fast. The MSWE chairman Willis Cookie, K5EWJ is getting everything coordinated for the event that will be held the first weekend of June. He is still need a co-chairman for the event so if you have some spare time and would like to get involved with planning the event, please contact Cookie and let him know. I know Cookie is working hard on the planning and he needs an extra hand or two to make it a successful and fun event.

Field Day is just around the corner and the planning is moving forward?. A FD chairman is still needed from BVARC to coordinate this annual event that will be held with TDXS and ECHO. Some basic coordination has already been handled – Fire Training field secured, the W5BXX RV is secured, but there is much more that needs to be done. A FD planning meeting was held on April 30th but the outcome was not available for the newsletter. If you would like to help with this event, which last year placed 1st in the 9A category and 12th in the entire contest, let someone on the Board of Directors know. Hopefully someone out of the 235 club members will step up to chair this club function.

The May club meeting will be interesting with Jeff Walter, KE5FGA, describing the inner workings of ARES and the government agencies it serves in Harris county. Make sure you come out to the next meeting for this interesting program.

See everyone at the meeting.

73,
Mike
N5VCX



BVARC Rag Chew Net April Check-Ins

03/25/15, K5LKJ (NCS), W5TOM, W5TKZ, KF5TFJ, W5HFF, K5LJ, W5RH, KF5PHA, K5IZO, AF5T, N5SSH (Laredo), AA0ST (Dickenson), WN5A, KG5BEK. (14 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 142, SN = 127, A = 12, K = 2

04/01/15, K5LKJ (NCS), W5TOM, W5TKZ, KF5TFJ, K0NM, W5HFF, W5LB (Madisonville, LA), K5IZO/5 (P)(Jasper), K5LJ, AF5T, AA0ST (Dickenson), W5RH, KF5PHA, KE5OBY, KG5BEK, WN5A, N5JSL, AF5OXF. (11 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 124, SN = 53, A = 9, K = 3

04/08/15, K5LKJ (NCS), KF5TFJ, W5TOM, W5TKZ, KC5JAR (Katy), KE5OBY, W5HFF, K5IZO, K5LJ, WN5A, AF5T, AA0ST (Dickenson), N5JSL, N5VCM (T), W5RH, AA5OA, K0NM. (17 Check-Ins)
Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 107, SN = 39, A = 5, K = 1

04/15/15, K5LKJ (NCS), W5HFF, KF5TFJ, W5TKZ, K5IZO, W5RH, K5LJ, KE5OBY, AF5T, AA5OA, AA0ST (Dickenson), WB4KTF. (12 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 150, SN = 97, A = 13, K = 4

04/22/15, W5TKZ (NCS), K5LKJ (T), KF5TFJ, W5HFF, KC5JAR (Katy), W5TOM, K5LJ, AF5T, AA5OA, W5RH, AA0ST (Dickenson), K5IZO.
(12 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 24: SFI = 150, SN = 153, A = 18, K = 2

(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



Museum Ships Weekend

Ok Gang, it is nearing the time of year for Museum Ships Week end for 2015. It is the weekend that starts on Friday, June 5 and continues through Saturday and Sunday, June 6 & 7. I have asked and received permission to hold the event at Ft. Travis Park on Bolivar Peninsula where we can set up for the weekend on Friday and tear down Sunday afternoon. We can stay all night if we wish and some of us will be there to guard equipment and supplies all weekend.

The park is an historical and interesting site. It was established as Fort Point in 1836 to guard the Galveston Port and later the port of Houston. The area was renamed Ft. Travis after the revolution to honor the hero of the Alamo. It is a 60 acre compound which was an active military base for Texas, the Confederacy and the United States until the end of WW2. 2500 troops were stationed there during WW2. Many of the buildings were destroyed by Hurrricanes Carla, Alicia and Ike, but the ruins are still there to be inspected and the bunkers remain intact. A few of the buildings are returned to use as a public park.

We will use Mike Hardwick's (N5VCX) trailer and the club's Hy-Gain beam as well as the Tri-plexer and add 40 and 6 meter antennas as well. We hope to contact around 1000 hams over the world. This is a good way to get tuned up for Field Day and we hope for a good turnout. There will be experienced members around to coach those of you who need to gain experience and plenty of time to ask questions and help in the set-up. BVARC supplies food for the weekend. Several of us will bring some equipment, transceivers, generators, antennas and the like to set up and use. Bring your equipment if you like, but let me know what you plan so that I can incorporate it is the overall plan. It is a good time to try things and get experience. Please let me know if you can so that I can plan for enough food.

I hope to set up a VHF FM station to give contacts on some of the area repeaters if there is interest.

Last year we had a tough time with the mosquitoes. I have some things that I plan to try this year to see if we can make things more livable in the area. It was nice most of the time, but for a couple of hours after dark when the sea breeze drove the biters in from the grassy area across the road it was not so nice. Last year was the first time that we were not allowed to set up at Seawolf Park. Ft. Travis is farther away and you can just see the ships from there, but staying all night and not needing to vacate the area are big pluses as are restrooms and showers. The ferry trip takes a bit of time, but it is fun and you get a good look at the ships and Seawolf Park. I asked for permission to use Seawolf this year, but the Cavalla Board denied us permission. If you have helpful ideas, please let me know. I am on 34/94 from time to time and my phone is 832-630-1799.

Cookie Cooke, K5EWJ, BVARC member and MSWE Chairman.



Field Day 2015 - Update

The first planning meeting of the BVARC/TDXS/ECHO Field Day was held on Thursday, April 30 at 7:00 pm. It was attend by 17 members from the three clubs to determine the organizational make-up of field day and to start the planning of the event.

This year's Field Day will be organized jointly by Mike Hardwick, N5VCX of BVARC and Mike Davidson, N5MT of TDXS and ECHO. There will also be 10 to 12 team or group leaders that will handle specific areas such as antennas, equipment, food and etc. Both Mike's will be asking for volunteers for these positions so if you would like to volunteer please let them know.

No decision has been made yet on what operating class this year's field day will be since that will be determined by the number of stations that are coordinated and set-up at Field Day.

So if you can spare the time, please let one of the Mike's know you would like to help out for Field Day. Help is needed to make the tri-club Field Day a success.





**BVARC Historical Vignettes – BVARC’s First President
Allen Mattis N5AFV, Club Historian**

My March 2015 column focused on BVARC’s first club roster that was published in the March 1978 newsletter. The first name on the roster was Jerry Albright, WD5HQU, the first president of BVARC. His call sign, WD5HQU, is no longer listed in FCC records and I listed him as “No current license – Silent Key?”

I was pleasantly surprised a couple of weeks ago to receive an e-mail from Jerry Albright informing me that he is alive and not a silent key. Jerry had read my column in the March 2015 BVARC newsletter on the club’s website and contacted me. This shows how important our club’s website is and we owe Eddie Runner, NU5K, a big thank you for maintaining the club’s website.

Jerry had let his FCC license lapse 12 years ago but recently tested for his Technician license and is now KG5GOZ. He plans to upgrade to General shortly. His wife, Carol, is KG5GOY, and they currently live in Angleton. Jerry and Carol will try to make it to one of our club’s meetings.



Jerry Albright, BVARC’s first president, was elected on September 30, 1977 at the Missouri City Fire Station on FM2234 (Photo courtesy of Jerry Albright)





Minutes of the April 9th, 2015 Board of Directors meeting of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

Mike Hardwick N5VCX called the monthly Board of Directors meeting for the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club to at 7:00 PM on April 9th, 2015, at Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston 77074. Attending were: Mike Hardwick N5VCX (V.P.), Bob Tomlinson N5JSL (Treas.), Michael Monsour ACØTX (Rec.Sec./Quart.), Stephanie Vessey K5SFV (Cor. Sec, QSL Manager), Jerry Muller K9GEM (2yr At-Large Dir.), Darrel Kirk KC5JAR (1 yr At-Large Dir), Eddie Runner NU5K Webmaster, Suzanne Runner KF5GWZ, Rick Hiller W5RH, , Nathan Vessey N5NYV, Ron Litt K5HM (Radio Sport)

Announcements:

- 1.1 Bill Stone was adamant that he not be contacted during his medical absence including E mail or visitation.

Reports:

- 2.1 A motion was made and passed to accept the March minutes as published in the Newsletter and passed out to the Board.
- 2.2 A motion was made and passed to accept the Treasurer's report.

Old Business:

- 3.1 Nathan Vessey N5NYV gave the Hamfest review. There was a new method of counting people. Everybody entering the Hamfest was given one door prize tickets and these tickets were counted and the tickets counted were 1,345. Probably there is a need to combine table sales with admissions, as there was a lot of confusion. Seems to be a need to have a conference of hamfest organizers. Half the signed up volunteers did not show up. All prizes have been mailed except for one and there will be continuing attempts at contact.
- 3.2 John Chavin K5IZO reported that the ARRL thought that the Hamfest was just great. All vendors except for one vendor were pleased with the Hamfest.
- 3.3 Two items were stolen, an antenna rotator and a helicopter.
- 3.4 Museum Ships Weekend Event. Cookie (Willis Cooke) K5EWJ, the MSWE chairman has the permission of the county board. The BVARC Website has been updated regarding MSWE.
- 3.5 There is no Field Day chairman yet. There is a need to see if ECHO and TDXS will be there at Field Day.
- 3.6 General meetings. April 9th, Center Point Energy presentation, May 14th is open as the FCC canceled their presentation, June 11th ARES – Hurricane Preparedness second part: Field Day.
- 3.7 Membership Committee: no winners for special membership drive.
- 3.8 New meeting place in Rosenberg was suggested but the drive is too far.

New Business:

- 4.1 Dr David Woolweaver K5RAV, ARRL West Gulf Division director asked BVARC for nominations for three ARRL awards.
- 4.2 Website updates: The site has been updated regarding the Hamfest and MSWE
- 4.3 License Classes: Ron Litt K5HM and Nathan N5NYV are handling this. The sponsor will be Harris County Public Health using their facilities.
- 4.4 There is nothing on the Website with regarding how to be an Amateur Radio operator.
- 4.5 There needs to be a new membership packet past the tri-fold.
- 4.6 At the end of testing, there should be some welcome brochure for new hams
- 4.7 BP MS150 Bike Ride will occur April 18th & April 19th.

Meeting adjourned at 8:11PM

Submitted by Recording Secretary, Michael Monsour ACØTX

NOTE: Because of the disparity between the confirmed paid attendees at the Hamfest (896) and the above number (1345), Mike Hardwick, VP, has announced that an "official" number of attendees will be discussed at the Board meeting prior to approving these minutes.





Where is the World is . . .
Eritrea (E30)
CQ Zone 37



Eritrea, a delightful place to vacation and the site of a recent DXpedition, E30FB. Like its flag, it is a narrow slit of a country located on the west side of the Red Sea. Should you want to plan a side trip, it has some interesting neighbors, To the south, Somalia and Ethiopia; to the north Sudan.

It was occupied as Italian Eritrea in the late nineteenth century. Italy lost control of the country after WW II and it achieved its independence. The country is nominally a democracy was ranked last on the list of 178 countries with regard to media freedom. The current president has held office since 1994.

Eritrea has a variety of climatic conditions. Asmara at 7,700 feet has a pleasant climate all year (average temperature of 60° Fahrenheit. The eastern coastal areas receive little rain. On the coast, the months from June to September are extremely hot with daily temperatures ranging from 100°F to 122°F and hotter.



The political instability in Eritrea and its border problems with several surrounding countries can make getting around quite tough. As it stands today, military forces from Ethiopia remain strong along the border areas and crossing between the two is not allowed. But wait,



there's more! While Eritrea and Sudan mostly get along, their border-crossing procedure is vague and changes all the time. In addition to border issues, political repression runs rife throughout the country.

Not exactly retirement territory. Except for DXpeditions, there is no permanent ham radio activity in E3. According to Club Log, Eritrea

is the 20th most wanted DX Entity.

Reporting from the Dark Side,
Ron, K6HM





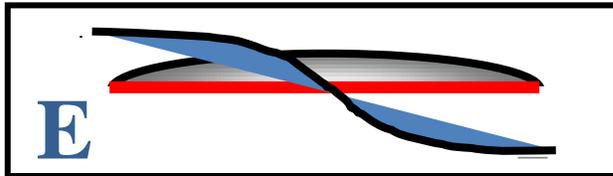
The Radio Hotel – The Antenna - Part 3 by W5RH

Resonance and Standing Waves and Feed Z -- Oh, My!

When talking antennas you need to think impedance. As you know, impedance is specified in 2 ways – 1) as a phasor with amplitude and angle, or 2) as an R (resistance) value and a j (reactance) value. Resistance is just that -- resistance, but reactance can be either capacitive xC or inductive xL. Knowing this then: resonance is the point where an antenna feedpoint exhibits close to zero reactance, neither capacitive xC or inductive xL. At resonance, the feedpoint is close to being “purely” resistive. The antenna is neither too short nor too long. On either side of resonance you have a feed Z that is resistive with the addition of inductive or capacitive reactance....too long or too short, respectively.

For example: a center fed dipole that is too short for a specific frequency will exhibit a feed Z with a resistive and a capacitive reactive feed $Z = R - jx_C$. We can lengthen the wire and cause it to be resonant. Then, if we extend the wire even further it will be reactive again and we'll have an $R + jx_L$ feed Z. You can see that for a fixed frequency we have to vary the length of the wire – called “tuning”. An antenna does not have to be spot on resonant, it can be off resonance quite a bit and it will still work, but more on this later.

OK, all well and good so far, but “resonant” to what? Ham’s use radio frequencies that relate to wavelength and wavelength relates to physical wire length. The shortest single wire that is resonant is one half a wave length long – remember, $468/F$ MHZ is the length formula for a one half wave length wire (180 electrical degrees). At this one half wavelength, the sinewave charge (voltage) flowing from the transmitter travels from the feedpoint to the end of the wire then reflects back again and it arrives at the exact degree of the sinewave as it came from (plus 180 degrees). Totally in sync, like a flywheel effect. This happens over and over and over and it generates a “standing wave” of voltage and current. (see cartoon). [Google Standing Wave Antenna](#)¹



Standing waves of voltage E and current I

From the cartoon you can see how the voltage and current standing waves relate: current is maximum in the middle and voltage is maximum at the ends. This relationship correlates with the value of the Feed point – it follows Ohm’s Law $E/I = R$.

- If the feedpoint is located in the middle of the resonant wire (center fed) where voltage is low and the current is high - the feed Z is low (i.e. 50 ohms).
- If the feedpoint is located at the end of the wire (end fed) where the voltage is high and the current is low - the feed Z is high (i.e. 1K ohms).

As you move the feedpoint out from the center to the end, the feed Z increases. For example: on an off-center fed dipole, the feedpoint is, typically, 1/3 the distance from the end and the fee Z is approximately 400 ohms.

Building up your knowledge of how antennas work and their characteristics will allow you to better understand antenna systems and then make the best decisions as to the antenna type to apply to your particular base, portable or mobile situation. **Next time – Polarization and Radiation patterns.**

Notes: 1-- Standing Wave antennas versus Traveling Wave antennas (Rhombics, Beverages, etc.) – Google the difference

*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.*



**Results of the March 28th, 2015 Greater Houston Hamfest
License Examination sessions held on Saturday, March 28, 2015 at
the Greater Houston Hamfest held at the Fort Bend County
Fairgrounds in Rosenberg, TX.**

B-VARC sponsored and administered the ARRL-VEC's Amateur Radio License Examination sessions held on Saturday, March 28, 2015 at the Greater Houston Hamfest held at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds in Rosenberg, TX.

Members of the Active VE Exam Team:

David Fanelli, KB5PGY	Larry Jacobson, K5LJ	John Koppenhaver, N0BNA
John Moore, KK5NU	George Ontko, KM5VP	Marie Schaer, KD5UJT

Twenty (20) examination elements were administered to eighteen (18) applicants during the course of our 0845 and 1015 two sessions during the day.

Three new Technician class licensees, six upgrades to General class, along with one new and one upgrade to Amateur Extra class were attained; with the total numbers of elements passed being Thirteen(13). The overall "pass rate" for the session was 65.0%.

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

Bruce C. Alfredson	- KG5GJQ - General
Brian Arenare	- K5TXT - General
Theodore J. Blackburn	- N9GVR - General
Tuan V. Dang	- KE5PCC - Amateur Extra
Harry R. Gibbs	- {KG5GVZ} - Technician
Patrick J. Kelly, III	- KG5FWV - General
David Harden	- {KG5GWA} - Technician
David L. Payne	- KG5BDV - General
Christopher S. Reviere	- K5BLT - General
Carl A. Silvrants, II	- {KG5GVY} - Technician
James A. Swetlikoe	- {AF5XL} - Amateur Extra

Many thanks to all the Team Members and our stand-by VE who volunteered their valuable time and effort for the hamfest sessions.

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**Results of the April 14th
BVARC Amateur License Examination Sessions
by: John Moore, KK5NU**

B-VARC sponsored and administered the ARRL's Amateur Radio Examination session that was held on Tuesday, April 14, 2015 at HCC's Scarcella Science & Technology Building here in Stafford, TX.

MEMBERS OF THE VE TEAM:

Larry Jacobson, K5LJ	John Moore, KK5NU
George Ontko, KM5VP	Robert B. Tomlinson, N5JSL

Five examination elements were administered during the evening to Four applicants. Two new Technician class, one new and one upgrade to General class license were attained, with the number of elements passed being 5. The overall "pass rate" for the evening was 100%.

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

Charles J. Carraway - KG5FAM - General
 Chad A. Kourek - {KG5HED} - General
 William G. Leska - {KG5HEC} - Technician
 Benjamin K. Stringer - {KG5HEB} - 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.

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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: x

1/12 - 34 - Rick, w5rh	2/16 - 25 - Ron, k5hm	3/23 - 34 - Pete, kd5qpx
1/19 - 31 - Ron, k5hm	2/23 - 23 - Cam, k5cam	3/30 - 24 - Terry, k5pgf
1/26 - 28 - Rick, w5rh	3/2 - 29 - David, n5ekw	4/6 - 39 - David, n5ekw
2/2 - 31 - David, n5ekw	3/9 - 20 - Rick, w5rh	4/13 - 25 - Rick, w5rh
2/9 - 28 - Rick, w5rh	3/16 - 28 - Ron, k5hm	4/20 - 20 - Ron, k5hm



Advertising in the BVARC Newsletter

Rates are as follows; \$25 per month for ½ 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.



Hamfests

(within 200 miles of Houston)

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

06/12/2015 | [West Gulf Division Convention \(Ham-Com\)](#)

Location: Irving, TX

Type: ARRL Convention

Sponsor: Plano ARC, Dallas ARC, & Irving ARC

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

07/18/2015 | [Tidelands Hamfest](#)

Location: Texas City, TX

Type: ARRL Hamfest

Sponsor: Tidelands Amateur Radio Society

Website: <http://tidelands.org>

[May 23 Alvin Texas Swap Meet](#)

Mike Payne will once again open the gates to Electro Junk Inc. in Alvin TX at 803 S Taylor for all to participate in the annual trunk and tail gate swap meet. You'll surely enjoy seeing Mike's fantastic collections of everything electronic imaginable. Gates will open for all at 8 AM. (This Alvin Swap Meet info submitted by Michael Monsour).

BRAZOS VALLEY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

This newsletter 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. Detailed information will be published in the newsletter every 3 months. Similarly, the "Eating Schedule" will be published every 3 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 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Eldridge Park Conference Center, 2511 Eldridge Rd, Sugar Land, 77478. Check the above website for any possible changes.

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 281-701-7602 or see the BVARC website: www.bvarc.org

Other contacts include:

President:, Bill Stone, WS5H, dragntow@wt.net

Newsletter Editor: John Chauvin, K5IZO, k5izo@yahoo.com

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**BRAZOS VALLEY
AMATEUR RADIO CLUB**

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FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

May General Membership Meeting – May 14



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