

## BVARC BEACON

Newsletter of the Brazos Valley Amateur Radio Club

AMATEUR RADIO FOR SOUTHWEST HOUSTON AND FORT BEND COUNTY



A WILLOW HOLD TON BOOTHINGS TON BEING COOK!

VOLUME 48 ISSUE 4 APRIL 2024

#### **General Membership Meeting is April 11th at 7:30 PM**

Community Volunteer Fire Department Community Center, 16005 Bellaire Blvd, Houston 77083

The BVARC Food Team is providing Tacos and Chips & Salsa!

# April 11<sup>th</sup> General Meeting ABR Industries Reveals New "Invisible Coax"

Chuck Abramson, K9FCA, of ABR Industries has chosen the BVARC April 11<sup>th</sup> general meeting to reveal a new line of "Invisible Coax" that his company will be handling. This coax, according to Chuck, will revolutionize the two-way radio industry in the coming years. Chuck stated "Invisible Coax" will make installations a breeze and allow more unique ways to install equipment.

Besides Chuck's information on the "Invisible Coax", he will also be giving an overview of coax cables and their different applications. Chuck will discuss the smallest cable RG-174 weighing in at 8 pounds per 1000 feet to one of the largest HCA618-50JFN, 6 1/8" heliax weighing nearly 7 pounds per foot.

So, be sure you make it out to the April 11<sup>th</sup> general meeting for this exciting revelation on a new product!

The BVARC Board of Directors Meeting will be in person on April 6th from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM at Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX 77074.

The BOD will return to ZOOM for the May Meeting.

April 2024 - Amateur Radio Events Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 <b>P S</b>	2 <b>Q S</b>	3 <b>R S</b>	4 S	5 <b>S</b>	6 BVARC Board Mtg 9-10AM Testing 10:30 AM Bayland Park
7	8 <b>P S</b>	9 <b>Q S</b> Brews w/ BVARC (TBD)	10 <b>R S</b>	11 <b>S</b> BVARC Mtg Fire Dept 7:30 PM	12 <b>S</b> Belton HamExpo	13 <mark>Belton</mark> HamExpo
14	15 <b>P S</b>	16 <b>Q S</b>	17 <b>R S</b>	18 <b>S</b>	19 <b>S</b>	20
21	22 <b>P S</b>	23 <b>Q S</b>	24 R S	25 <b>S</b>	26 <b>S</b>	27
28	29 <b>P S</b>	30 <b>Q S</b>	P: Pub Svc Net 8 PM Mondays Q: QuestionAIR Net 7:30 PM Tuesdays		R: Rag Chew 7 PM Wednesdays S: Stir Crazy Net Noon Mon-Fri	

Belton HamExpo is April 12-13th, 2024 at the Bell County Expo Center, 301 Loop 121, Belton, TX 76513. Also add Fall 2024 HamExpo to your schedule: October 4-5th, 2024.

#### 2024 Greater Houston HamFest Grand Prize Winners

The Greater Houston HamFest strives to have great raffle prizes and this year was no exception. This year the GHHF had five great raffle prizes awarded at the 2 PM drawing on Saturday. All prizes were awarded to happy hams and were in their new homes within a few days. The prizes were:

Grand Prize – Yaeus FTDX-10 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize – Yaesu FTM-500D 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize – Yaesu FT-70DR 4<sup>th</sup> Prize – NANO VNA 5<sup>th</sup> Prize – Yaesu – FT4-XR

Here are a few pictures of those happy hams with their new "toys".



All the winners said they enjoyed the GHHF and really appreciated the hard work that everyone did for the event. They said they will be back again in 2025 and they all plan to buy more raffle tickets!



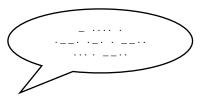
#### **Greater Houston HamFest Tech Talks**

We had 10 total talk sessions in the 2 rooms allocated to the presentations. Some well attended and others not so. The well attended talks were mainly about practical things like solar power, HOA antenna issues, satellites, antenna modeling, etc. 264 attendees enjoyed the various subjects presented. Thank you to those giving the talks and thank you to those that attended. It was a very positive activity at this year's ham fest. I'm looking forward to doing it again next year. If you have any comments, criticisms or requests, please let me know. W5RH



#### The Prez Sez

Well, the Greater Houston HamFest is behind us, and it was a great success. With over one thousand people attending, the two-day event brought vendors and attendees from all over Texas and several states. Many vendors said they



had great sales and will be back again. HRO of Plano said they loved their new location in the building, and they will be back again as well. Five great prizes were given away in the main raffle (more information on this on Page 2) and well as over fifty door prizes. Overall, the Greater Houston HamFest was a winner!

I want to thank everyone the helped on the Greater Houston HamFest. Without your help, the hamfest would not have happened. Your hard work and determination are what made the event a success for its 21<sup>st</sup> year. Please accept my wholehearted thanks on what you did, and I hope everyone will be back again for the 2025 HamFest. Again, I thank everyone, all 65 of you that helped on the hamfest.

The March program was great with Bob Stroupe, W5KK, on his great program about the ins and outs of commercial radio broadcasting. Bob has many years as chief engineer at several broadcasting companies over the years, has experienced many unique situations, and was able to pass on the knowledge he has learned. Unfortunately, Bob did not give us the secrets on starting a pirate radio station.

Coming up for the April 11<sup>th</sup> general meeting, Chuck Abramson, K9FCA, of ABR Industries will be revealing a new product that he will be selling – Invisible Coax! Besides talking about the new product, Chuck will be giving an overview of coaxial cables and their uses. More information on the program on Page 1.

And do not forget Brews with BVARC on April 9th. Kori, WX5KR, at the time that this was written still had not determined a location so check the BVARC web site for more info.

See you there at the April 11<sup>th</sup> general meeting.

73*,* N5VCX





### New BVARC Life Members for 2024

BVARC would like to acknowledge the new life members in the beginning of 2024. The club really appreciates their support for the club and without their contribution, the club would not be where it is today. The new life members are:

Mark McGrath, N5VCM Reid Williams, KR5EID Kirc Breden, N5XJB Ivan Shabelev, KI5SSL Patrick "In the Matrix" Sloan, N5JRY

A big thanks go out to the new 2024 life members.





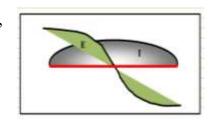
The BVARC Board of Directors meeting did not have a quorum in March, so no official business was conducted.

## The Radio Holel - The End

#### The Initial Antenna "Known" By Rick Hiller – W5RH

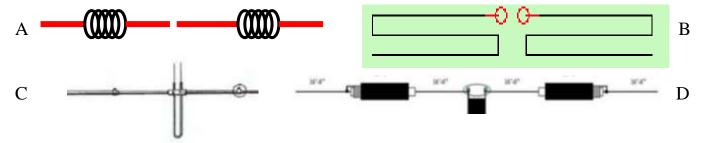
There is a song in The Sound of Music Broadway show (and movie) that goes, "Let's start at the very beginning. It's a very fine place to start". Ok, that is fine for Rodgers and Hammerstein, but not for antennas. The best place to start with an antenna analysis is at the end. It is the only place on an antenna's length that has common characteristics for probably 90% of the antennas that we know. This occurs especially in the world of long wires, dipoles and verticals.

Why? Because: at the end of the wire or element there is always high voltage 'E' and low current 'I'. Always! Knowing this fact, makes it a great place to start analyzing most antennas. We all know that antennas of the HF wire/element type have a standing wave of current (and voltage) along their length (see Fig. 1) and that the values of the current standing wave follow a sinusoidal curve. From zero electrical degrees at the end, back to 90



degrees electrical, a current maximum at that point and typically the feed point.

Along the way to the 90 degree point, the thing that can affect this sinusoidal distribution is any loading that is in place. For example, but not limited to, (A) coils adding lumped xL, (B) linear loading folded elements, (C) phasing stubs creating a collinear array and/or (D) the W5GI Mystery antenna stubs, etc.



So, as you are driving down the highway and you're seeing some vertical antenna on a water tower or a multi-element Yagi-Uda array on a tower, you can get a fairly close approximation of what it is by starting at the element end and working your way to the center or to the base of a vertical. Pretty soon you'll be analyzing every antenna you see. Almost to the point of "subitizing," if that can be applied to visual antenna analysis. It will become second nature, as the more you do it, questioning what and how and then researching what you see, the more familiar and knowledgeable you will become about antenna workings and theory. So here's wishing you success in attaining that lofty goal. Enjoy your new found Zen.

Oh yes, the other movie song, written by Frank Loesser, that has to do with antennas is "The Inch Worm" – It goes.... "Inch Worm, Inch worm, measuring the dipole length". HI HI. Enjoy your hobby.

# Where in the World is ... Australia ( VK1 - VK9) IOTA OC-001, OC-006 CQ Zones 29, 30 ITU Zones 55, 58, 59



Australia is a sovereign country that is made up of the Australian continent, Tasmania, and other smaller islands. It is the world's sixth-largest country and the largest country in Oceania. Australia is located between the Pacific and Indian oceans, west of New Zealand. You can't miss it.

Australia is very ham active. There are over 30,000 ham call signs registered in Australia, according to QRZ. There is an initial license fee of \$80 (AUD) and \$55 (AUD) for

renewals. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) issues reciprocal licenses for U.S. Hams. The highest-grade license is the Advanced Class. It is equivalent to the Amateur Extra Class in the U.S. Australia has as a "bilateral" operating agreement with the US. If you are planning a trip there, contact the ARRL or ACMA for assistance.

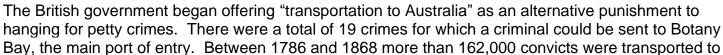
Australia is a fascinating country. Did I say it was big? It was first discovered around 1660 by Dutch

traders and explored later by Captain Cook. They traded with the aborigines. Most of the island's interior is desert and high plains. 87% of the population lives within 31 miles of the coast.

The Industrial Revolution, which brought tremendous wealth to Britain, had spawned a major crime wave. Beggars, pickpockets, and thieves swarmed London's streets. Law abiding citizens feared this "criminal class" from the slums. They demanded action to stop the crime wave.

British authorities already punished criminals severely – often by hanging. There were over 200 death penalty

offenses, most of them for stealing and other property crimes. Since no prisons existed as we know them today, hanging criminals was one of the few options available.





various penal colonies in the countryside. More than two years passed before any relief ships arrived from Britain. During this time, the colonists nearly starved. But somehow over the next few years, Governor Phillip used convict labor to plant crops, establish herds of livestock (mainly sheep), and construct buildings and roads necessary for the colony. In the meantime, the British government continued to empty out the English hulks by transporting more than a thousand convicts to Sydney each year. By 1792, when Governor Phillip returned to Britain, New South Wales had survived five harsh years to become largely self-sufficient.



Since the country is below the equator, you will find lots of differences in daily life there. They drive on the wrong side of the road, use the metric system, drink 5% beer, summer is winter and vice versa. Also they insist on adding a "u" in words, like harbour instead of harbor and colour for color.

Since Australia is an island, many unique animal species have evolved. Wallabies, koala bears and the platypus to name a few. Oh yes, they limit transmit power to 400 watts.



**Melbourne** is the second-largest city in Australia and is a cool metropolitan city full of culture. It has loads of galleries, museums, markets, festivals, dining, and bar options. The city is easy to move around with the free public transport system it offers. The city's architecture and multicultural experiences give you European vibes. If you're a cricket buff, you have got to visit the Melbourne Cricket ground.

You cannot visit Australia and avoid **Sydney**, the largest metropolis, and the most popular tourist place in Australia. The capital city of New South Wales, Sydney is a modern city developed around a scenic harbor. If you go don't miss the Sydney Opera House.

Remember, to get there just head south and turn right at New Zealand, you can't miss it.

Reporting from the Dark Side Ron Litt, K5HM





#### HAM EXAM QUESTION

What is meant by IARP?

- A. An international amateur radio permit that allows U.S. amateurs to operate in certain countries of the Americas
- B. The internal amateur radio practices policy of the FCC
- C. An indication of increased antenna reflected power
- D. A forecast of intermittent aurora radio propagation







BVARC reserves a four-hour block for training or programs at Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX 77074. If you would like to do a program or have a training class, please contact Mike Hardwick, N5VCX at n5vcx@att.net to reserve your date. The classroom is available from 9 am to 1 pm. The reservation is free to the club and any member can use it.

Available Dates in 2024:

April 20 May 18 July 20 August 17 September 21 October 19 November 23 December 28

#### FEBRUARY and MARCH VE - FCC TESTING SESSIONS RESULTS

For the February 3<sup>rd</sup> test session at Bayland Park - we had 3 candidates and conducted 5 tests.

New Licensee: Upgrades

Pollard, A. (Technician - KJ5EJC) KC5DJY (Extra)

Vaught, J. (Technician)

VEs in attendance – K5GOL, K5LJ, W5LIC, KG4NDS, KG5ICR, KF5BMZ and WX5KR – **THANKS!** 

For the three March test sessions (3/1, 3/2 & 3/9) overall we had 26 candidates and conducted 44 tests.

New Licensee New Licensee

Booth, B (Technician) Woodworth, J (Technician)

Little, F (Technician)

Reeves, W (Technician)

Shultis, J (Technician)

Williams, R (Technician)

Cherbuy, J (General)

Williford, D (Technician)

Relampagos, P (General)

Williford, J (Technician)

Johnson, C (Technician) Upgrades

Joseph, S (Technician)

Kendall, D (Technician)

McGrail, C (Technician)

Reyes, J (Technician)

Tripp, B (Technician)

KI5LQS (General)

KJ5CQC (General)

KI5RHQ (General)

KI5IOJ (Extra)

KJ5DOW (Extra)

VEs in attendance – K5GOL, K5LJ, W5LIC, KG4NDS, and KG5ICR – THANKS!

Congratulations to All!

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The next BVARC test session will be **Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup>** at 10:30am.

#### Pre-registration is required.

For new licensees the testing fee, paid at the session is \$15. An additional \$35 license fee (totaling \$50) will be collected by the FCC separately for new, renewal and vanity calls. License upgrades **do not** pay the added \$35 fee, just the \$15 session fee.

#### YOUTH LICENSING INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The ARRL has created a youth program (18 and under) to defray the licensing costs to a total of **\$5** (deducting the \$35 increase and \$10 off the \$15 VE session fee). See: <a href="http://www.arrl.org/youth-licensing-grant-program">http://www.arrl.org/youth-licensing-grant-program</a>

Also, BVARC is implementing its own program for youth licensing.

We'll provide a <u>new VHF/UHF transceiver (Baofeng, limited supply)</u> at the VE session, to youth that successfully pass their Technician test. This is the result of a very generous donation (Dec. '23) from a BVARC member, THANKS!

Bottom line, a young person for \$5, can walk into a test session and walk out with a new radio and a pending license.

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Examination sessions are held each month, most times the first weekend of the month and usually on the same weekend as the Sunday BVARC Board meeting. These testing sessions are at the Bayland Park Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St., Houston TX 77074

Details for candidates are found at <a href="https://bvarc.org/home/ham-radio-license-testing-houston/">https://bvarc.org/home/ham-radio-license-testing-houston/</a> Pre-register to attend a test session at: <a href="https://hamstudy.org/sessions/arrl/77008/inperson">https://hamstudy.org/sessions/arrl/77008/inperson</a> For questions, Email Mark Janzer, K5MGJ at (<a href="https://k5mgj@yahoo.com">k5mgj@yahoo.com</a>).

#### Where in the World is ... Solomon Islands (H4) CQ Zone 28 ITU Zone 51 IOTA OC-047

The Solomon Islands, a nation of hundreds of islands in the South Pacific, has many WWII era sites. Guadalcanal, a province and one of the archipelago's largest islands, honors fallen Allied soldiers at its U.S. War Memorial. Guadalcanal is also home to the nation's capital, Honiara, whose bustling Central Market show cases the islands' produce and traditional handicrafts.



Consisting of six major islands and over 900 smaller islands to the northeast of Australia. It is directly adjacent to Papua New Guinea. It has a total population exceeding 734,000. Though the islands had been populated for many thousands of years, the Spanish navigator Alvaro de Mendana was the first European to discover the Solomons. Relations with native islanders soured over time. Beginning in the 1840's, islanders began to be recruited (or often kidnapped) as laborers for the colonies in Australia, Fiji and Samoa in a process known as "black birding." Conditions for workers were often poor and exploitative, and local islanders often attacked any Europeans who appeared on their island.



From 1942 until the end of 1943, the Solomon Islands were the scene of several major land, sea, and air battles between the Allies and the Japanese Empire's armed forces. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, war was declared between Japan and the Allied Powers. Japan, seeking to protect their southern flank, invaded South-East Asia and New Guinea. In May 1942 they invaded most of the western Solomon Islands, including Guadalcanal where they began work on an airstrip. Most of the European population had been evacuated to Australia. The Marines counterinvaded Guadalcanal in August 1942, followed by the Army under Gen. Macarthur's New Georgia campaign in 1943, both

of which were turning points in the Pacific War, stopping, then countering the Japanese advance.

Solomon Islands achieved internal self-government in 1976 and became independent in July 1978. The country's system of Government is a Parliamentary Democracy with a unicameral legislature.

The British monarch as Head of State is represented locally by the Governor-General. Legislative power is vested in a unicameral National Parliament of 47 members, elected for a four-year term. Executive authority is exercised by the Cabinet. English is the official language, but Solomon Islands pijin is the lingua franca. There are over 80 different local languages plus dialects.



The Solomon Islands are 91<sup>st</sup> on the Club Log most wanted list. There are 132 callsigns listed in QRZ. Several are duplicated. H40A is the Solomon Islands Amateur Radio Club (SIARC). Please contact them or the ARRL for more details about operating there.

Reporting from the Dark Side, Ron Litt, K5HM

#### **BVARC Rag Chew Net**

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

02/21/24, K5LKJ (NCS), K5LJ, K5RBC (Lake Jackson), N5VCM, K5IZO (Jasper), K5JPP, WW5PA (Rosenberg), W5LIC/5 (Channelview), W5ALW, KG5ICR, K5TPC (Bellaire), AA5OA (Pearcy, AR), W5WES (Baytown), KI5RLZ (Channelview), W5CNM (Kountze), KI5HOC, K5DBL (Manvel), W5RH, KI5SKL, W5VOM. (20 Check-Ins)

Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 153, SN = 45, A = 6, K = 1 / Band Rpt: GOOD

02/28/24, K5LKJ (NCS), K5JPP, KG5ICR, K5LJ, KI5HOC, K5AKM (Alexandria, LA), N5VCM, K5TPC (Bellaire), W5VOM, KF5ONT (Conroe), AA5OA (Pearcy, AR), W5TKZ, W5ALW, AI5KD (Pearland), KA5YIX, KI5SKL, K5DBL (Manvel), NT5SM, KI4YTV (New Brockton, AL), KD9REK (Rockledge, FL). (20 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 180, SN = 127, A = 6, K = 1 / Band Rpt: GOOD

03/06/24, K5LKJ (NCS), K5JPP, K5LJ, WW5PA, W5RH, W5ALW, W5TKZ, AA5OA (Pearcy, AR), W5CNM (Kountze), W5VOM, K5TPC (Bellaire), K5IZO/5 (Jasper), KC5THR (College Station). (13 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 136, SN = 105, A = 6, K = 0 / Band Rpt: FAIR

03/13/24, K5LKJ (NCS), K5JPP, W5TKZ, W5VOM, K5LJ, KG5ICR, K5YTA (Montgomery), W5ALW, KG5SBA (Lake Charles, LA), KG5AAH (Ethyl, LA), AI5KD (Pearland), KI5UKI (Dequincy, LA), W5LIC (Bellaire), K5TPC (Bellaire), K5DBL (Manvel), KI5RLZ (Channelview). (16 Check-Ins) Solar Cycle 25: SFI = 128, SN = 86, A = 12, K = 2 / Band Rpt: GOOD

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

Net conditions have been good this month. Fire up the rig and learn what others are doing and share your experiences. Come join in the conversation each Wednesday evening. Regards. John K5LKJ

#### Advertising in the BVARC Newsletter

Rates are as follows: Business card sized ads are \$10 each or 6 monthly installments for \$50; Half (½) page - \$25 per monthly for \$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.



BUARG EVENTS

**Saturday Breakfast** 6:30 AM IHOP Stafford 12725 Southwest Fwy Stafford, TX 77477

**Wednesday Lunch Bunch** 11 AM to Noon Luby's Cafeteria 10575 W Airport Blvd Stafford, TX 77477 **Ham Exam Answer:** A. An international amateur radio permit that allows U.S. amateurs to operate in certain countries of the Americas.



#### 2024 Club Officers

President (2024-2025) Michael Hardwick N5VCX n5vcx@att.net *Vice President (2023-2024)* Kori Rahman WX5KR kori113@gmail.com Recording Secretary (2024-2025) Sean Linkenheimer N5LNK sean.N5LNK@gmail.com Corresponding Secretary (2023-2024) Jeff Greer W5JEF greerjw@hotmail.com *Treasurer* (2023-2024) David Ely N5EKW davidely@prodigy.net 2 Year At-Large Board Member A (2024-2025) Terry Leatherland K5PGF k5pgf@yahoo.com 2 Year At-Large Board Member B (2023-2024) Drew Dasher N1ER adasher18@hotmail.com 1 Year At Large (2024) Daphne Rawlinson K5VQY

daphne rawlinson@hotmail.com

#### 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 <a href="www.bvarc.org">www.bvarc.org</a>. 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 per year, with student dues \$10 per year, additional family members \$5 per member per year.

Club meetings are both in-person and via Zoom on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. If you have signed up for the email reflector, you will receive notice and the attendance password, etc. It will also be on the website a few days beforehand.

BVARC amateur radio testing 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 PM on the 146.94 (minus offset, PL 167.9 tone) repeater.

A "Stir Crazy Net" is also held weekdays at 12 Noon on the 146.94 (minus offset, PL 167.9 tone) repeater.

A rag chew net is held each Wednesday at 7 PM on 3910 KHz +/- 3 KHz.

The QuestionAIR Net is held every Tuesday at 7:30 PM on the 146.94 (minus offset, PL 167.9 tone) repeater.

To obtain information about joining BVARC or its activities, see the BVARC website: www.bvarc.org

Other contacts: **BVARC President** Mike Hardwick N5VCX <u>n5vcx@att.net</u>, **Newsletter Editor** Donovan Balli KG5BDZ <u>dballi@mail.com</u>, **Editor Emeritus** John Chauvin K5IZO <u>k5izo@yahoo.com</u>, **Newsletter Printing**, **Assembly**, **and Mailing** Mike Hardwick N5VCX <u>n5vcx@att.net</u>, Jeff Greer W5JEF <u>greerjw@hotmail.com</u>, Gokhan Koralturk KG0KHN <u>gokkor@gmail.com</u>

BVARC General Meeting - Thursday April 11, 2024, Community Volunteer Fire Department, 16005 Bellaire Blvd, Houston 77083

**VOLUME 48, ISSUE 4** 

**APRIL 2024** 

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Board of Directors Meeting –Saturday April 6, 2024, 9-10 AM, Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX 77074

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

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