# THE SIGNAL

## Newsletter of the Bella Vista area Radio Club

***Arkansas' largest amateur radio club***

**October 2022**

Monthly Meetings: 1st Thursdays @ 7 p.m.
Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy (ALETA)
3424 S. Downum Road, Springdale AR

***Club Call: N5BVA • Repeater: 147.255 +offset, pl 162.2***
***Website: www.bellavistaradioclub.org***

## WEEKLY NETS:

- 3.830 KHz Roundtable
Sundays @ 4 pm during CST, 4:30 pm during CDT

- 147.255 BVRC Legacy Net - Wednesdays @ 8 pm

- Wide Area Net - Tuesdays @ 8 pm on the NWA Skywarn Link System
Bentonville – 146.865, -offset, pl 103.5
Fayetteville – 147.315, +offset, pl 97.4
Huntsville – 443.625, +offset, pl 97.4
Green Forest – 145.310, -offset, pl 103.5

# NEXT BVRC MONTHLY MEETING

## Thursday, October 6, 2022 @ 7PM
## Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy
## 3424 S. Downum Road
## Springdale, AR

## OCTOBER MEETING INFORMATION

**BVRC's Technical Officer, Tem Moore – N5KWL, will take the spotlight for our October meeting as he provides information on the very important topic of the Arkansas Repeater Council. Tem is also on the Board of Directors of the council. This program will be of special interest to all those who operate via our area's VHF and UHF repeaters.**

**If a doctorate degree existed in VHF/UHF communications, Tem would hold it. His vast experience in this area over the decades has taken him to many towers on many high places, installing and maintaining scads of repeaters and repeater linked systems not only for the ham community, but governmental agencies as well.**

**Tem will explain why individual states have volunteer amateur repeater frequency coordinator councils and how Arkansas also recognized the needs, and the goals that were set, when the new council began several years ago. He will discuss how difficult and time consuming it was to coordinate a repeater pair of frequencies before the new council was put in place.**

**He will take us to the Arkansas Repeater Council website, for all to see and will demonstrate how one who desires to be assigned a frequency pair goes about making a request and the processes that occur. He will also demonstrate the ease of logging into the site to make updates to one's repeater keeping all the info up to date. Tem's program will then conclude with a Q&A session on the subject of repeaters: how they work, good operating practices, how to start a QSO, and any other related questions that attending members might have.**

**Don't miss this informational presentation which contains vital information on repeater operation and coordination. See you then!**

# September Meeting Features Parks On The Air

It was a packed house for the Bella Vista area Radio Club September 2022 meeting, as members were introduced to a new program topic that has previously never been presented to the Club. Jan Hagan – WB5JAN from Bella Vista regaled one of the newer and exciting operational activities that has taken the airwaves by a storm - POTA (Parks On The Air).

Jan is most likely the Club's leading authority on this enterprise as he has just become the proud recipient of POTA's award for working and confirming 1000 individual parks.


Jan gave an excellent presentation with his outstanding oratory, a great slide presentation, and a live on-line tour/demonstration of the POTA website.

Jan said that POTA was born in 2016 from NPOTA (National Parks On The Air that only occurred that year).

Jan told us there are two ways you can start in Parks On The Air:

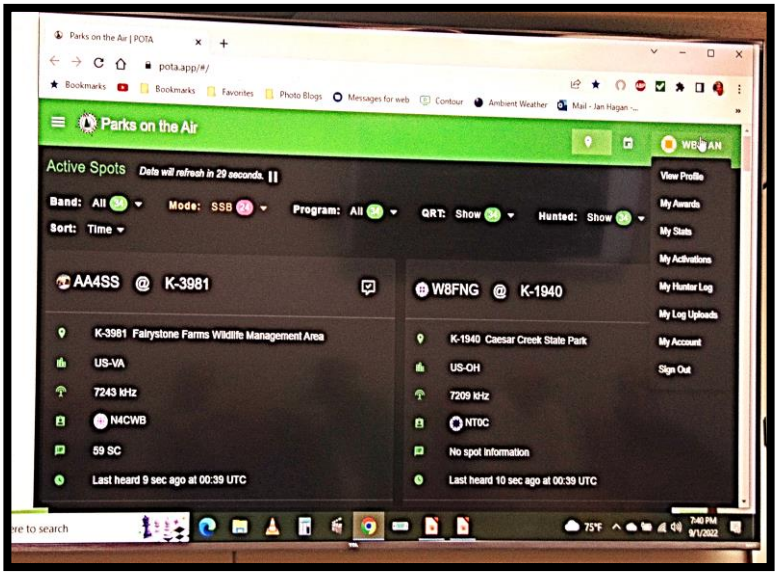
- As an Activator – An activator physically goes to a given city, county, state, or U.S. park, operates from that location either by portable or mobile means, and puts the park on the air (activates it) for amateurs around the world to contact for POTA credit.

- As a Hunter – A ham who is tuning the bands, or using the POTA or other spotting service, to find Activators on the air from a park. Jan said a good tool you can use is the POTA app (https://pota.app) to find activators and work them.

He shared one of the highlights of the POTA program (unlike Logbook of the World where *both* operators have to upload their logged contact to the LotW program) is that you do *not* have to submit, or upload, your log extract to gain POTA credits. It is up to the Activator to submit the contact he/she made with you from *their* log. This gives you POTA credit for confirming that park, and gives them POTA credit for activating it which is a win-win for both parties.

Jan then took attending members on a live tour of the POTA website, and demonstrated the method that he particularly uses for his approach in hunting parks:

- Locate an interesting park using the POTA app
- Tune to the frequency using the N3FJP software CAT interface and make the QSO.
- Cut and paste the Activator call in the N3FJP logging program
- Cut and past the park designator # and park name




Jan then explained the spotting page, which is the section of the POTA website where other hams post what frequency and when an Activator puts a park on the air, along with the station's callsign, park location, park designator, where the park is geographically located, and other related information. This post is called a "spot".

He then proceeded to the POTA website section where you can check your statistics: parks you have confirmed, states containing the parks you have contacted, etc. The website also has excellent graphics and data graphs.

Jan also added some very important information on activating parks. – To be an Activator, you must log at least 10 QSOs from any given park, you can only activate parks that are on the official POTA park list, your location must be on public property and within the park's boundaries, and the park must be open to the public.

He said that most Activators average running only around 20-50 watts on HF with generally a portable antenna, but they get great results and make hundreds of Hunters very happy.


**President Tom Northfell – W5XNA presents Jan Hagan – WB5JAN with the BVRC Program Certificate of Appreciation**

He suggested using N3FJP software for the logging program, although there are others that are applicable to POTA. One such program was created exclusively for POTA Activators and is called the HAMRS ("hammers") program.

Jan concluded his presentation by encouraging everyone who might be interested in this on-air activity to give it a try, and see how much fun it can be.

If you missed the meeting and this great program, you can see it on the Bella Vista Radio Club YouTube channel: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epzTiL9dDiU&t=241s**

Jan, kudos for a splendid program! We are pleased to have you in the Club, as well as one of our new Net Control Stations for the weekly Wednesday evening BVRC 2-meter Legacy Net. Best wishes in net controlling and chasing those parks!


**Hey, BVRC members – if you've been enjoying the articles and stories in THE SIGNAL, I'm sure there are a LOT of you that have had *some* ham radio related experience along those same lines around the house, around town, or on a vacation trip.**

**Don't think for a minute that your story would be "boring". Send it to us! Interesting stories – short or long – go a long way in making the newsletter interesting, because they are coming from folks that we know and interact with, in the club.**

**I always get excited when a club member sends-in an article to place in the newsletter! We've had some excellent submissions from several of our members with more to come! Jump on the bandwagon with us and send 'em in! We look forward to hearing about and including any and all interesting radio related stories from YOU!**

**Send your story/article/pics to Don at: arsk5db@gmail.com**

**THANKS & 73!**

# BVRC OFFICERS

**President**
Tom Northfell - W5XNA
w5xna@arrl.net

**Vice – President**
Don Banta - K5DB
arsk5db@gmail.com

**Secretary**
Dana Hill - W5DGH
dana.hill1979@gmail.com

**Treasurer**
Marc Whittlesey - WØKYZ
almarc11@yahoo.com

**Technical Officer**
Tem Moore - N5KWL
temmoore@gmail.com

**Repeater & Club Call Trustee**
Glenn Kilpatrick - WB5L
wb5l@arrl.net

# APPOINTED OFFICERS

**VE Testing Coordinator**
Don Cooper - KC7DC
don_c@hotmail.com

**Elmer 9-1-1 Coordinator**
Vinson Carter - WV5C
vinsoncarter@gmail.co

**2-meter Net Coordinator**
Ron Evans - K5XK
k5xk@arrl.net

**EmComm Director**
Chris Ebert - NAØD
wpuc675@gmail.com

**Webmaster**
Glenn Kilpatrick - WB5L
wb5l@arrl.net

**Video Director**
Adnan Ademovic - KDØKCY
kd0kcy@gmail.com

**Newsletter Editor**
Don Banta - K5DB
arsk5db@gmail.com

# From the Desk of the President

***Welcome*** **– Welcome members to the October 2022 issue of *The Signal* - the monthly newsletter of the Bella Vista Radio Club produced and edited by Don K5DB. Articles and photos for the newsletter are always appreciated.**

***Thanks!*** **– Thanks to the several new members of BVRC for joining the club and your support! We hope that you will become actively involved in the club and our great hobby. Welcome aboard! A special thanks also goes to Jan Hagen – WB5JAN for a great presentation on working *Parks on the Air (POTA)* events. I am already hearing about members joining POTA and getting in on the fun. FB!**

***September Amateur Radio in Northwest Arkansas*** **–**

**September turned out to be a very busy month for amateur radio in NW Arkansas:**

- **9/1 BVRC Meeting and Rookie Q & A**
- **CW Class with K5DB**
- **9/22 - 9/25 K5A Special Event at the QTH of K5DB (details in the Nov. issue)**
- **9/24 Pea Ridge Tailgate**
- **The exciting advent of the Lingle Middle School (Rogers) Amateur Radio Club – Robert – K5NZV Teacher/Sponsor**
- **9/24 Ozark Wireless Society**
- **9/30 - 10/1 Joplin Hamfest**
- **Weekly BVRC Breakfast**

***October Club Meeting*** **– This month's meeting will feature a presentation on the Arkansas Repeater Council by *Mr. Repeater* himself, Tem Moore N5KWL. This is another presentation that you don't want to miss. I encourage everyone to invite friends and neighbors to our meetings. Guests are ALWAYS welcome.**

***Accelerated Amateur Radio License Class Followup*** **– Congratulations to the class of 2022! BVRC had its first Q & A session for new hams at the September meeting at 6 pm. Vinson – WV5C, who is also our Elmer 911 coordinator, moderated the session along with seasoned veterans. There will be another session before the October meeting. Bring your questions for the benefit of the group. We are here to help.**

***On the Air - BVRC Weekly Nets*** **(detailed information on the BVRC website) –**

- **Tuesday - Wide Area Net 8 pm - NWA Skywarn Liked System**
- **Wednesday - 2m Legacy Net 8 pm**
- **Sunday - BVRC 75 Meter Round Table 4:30 pm**

***BVRC Planning Calendar*** **–**

- **Joplin ARC Hamfest Sep. 30 - Oct. 1**
- **BVRC Nomination Committee - October**
- **BVRC Holiday Banquet and Awards (December 1)**
- **BVRC 2023 Club Election**

***QSY*** – Finally, I would like to advise everyone that it's time for me to QSY from president to that of an active BVRC member at the end of this year. Vice-president Don - K5DB has advised me that he also wishes to do the same. After serving for 3 years, we are both looking forward to having more free time in front of the microphone and at the paddle. (For you newcomers to amateur radio, QSY is the Q-code for "change or move to another frequency".)

Don and I will still be actively involved with the Club in assisting with operating events such as Field Day and will continue in working with BVRC VE Coordinator Don Cooper – KC7DC, administering VE exam sessions in Springdale to complement the exam sessions in Bella Vista. Also, Don will continue with his duties as our club newsletter editor.

After 3 years, we feel that it is time to pass the torch to any members who are willing to step-up and run for the President and Vice-President positions. The Nomination Committee, as stated in the Club Bylaws, will open nominations in October and nominations will be accepted up to the December meeting when the nominees will be voted on by the membership present at that meeting.

*Myself and Don strongly encourage any interested members who would enjoy serving in an administrative/leadership role to run for these offices. If you are interested in very rewarding and fulfilling positions and working with a GREAT group of hams, please contact the BVRC Nomination Committee (send e-mail to info@bellavistaradioclub.org ) to place your name on the election ballot for 2023 officers.*

During the past 3 years, the club has weathered through a pandemic that saw closed meeting opportunities and venues, but has come out the other side in good shape IMHO. Since January 2020 our membership has grown by 108 (with still 3 months to go). Also, we just recently learned from Jay Ferguson – N5LKE, ARRL Arkansas Section Manager, that BVRC is "hands down" the largest ham racio club in Arkansas. The leadership team and our wonderful members have combined to make this milestone happen. I believe that BVRC has the best amateur radio website, newsletter, and YouTube channel in the state of Arkansas, if not the entire ARRL Delta Division.

Thanks to the VE teams for helping prospective hams get their "ticket."

A shout out to Jon – K5DVT for the use of his Skywarn linked repeater system and our loyal and talented NCS operators, as well as the outstanding NCSs for our newly formatted BVRC 2-Meter Legacy Net, both providing BVRC with a weekly on-air presence

Thanks to Wayne - K5UNX for getting our virtual meetings on our YouTube channel and everyone who participated in the shack visits or demonstrations. You played a MAJOR part in keeping BVRC alive and relevant during a very difficult pandemic season.

It takes knowledge, time and talent to give a valuable presentation. My thanks to all of the presenters we have had over the years and big thanks to Adnan - KDØKCY for being the club videographer.

To everyone who helped with recent Field Day activities, a big THANKS!

***An astronomical thanks to Gregg Harrison – KF5WAP and the NW Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy for welcoming BVRC to hold our meetings at their premiere education and training facility. It has been a game changer!***

I have *many more* people to publicly thank at the December meeting and a whole bunch of thank you cards to write over the next few months and beyond.

I know that, speaking for Don and myself, we will never outgrow chasing DX, working contests, helping others in the hobby, *and especially being a part of BVRC*.

It has been an honor and privilege to have been a member of a great leadership team and an outstanding amateur radio club. I leave this position with many more friends and great memories.

**Please contact me or any club officer with any suggestions or concerns: w5xna@arrl.net and/or 479-530-0967.**

**73 es gud DX,**

**Tom – W5XNA**
**BVRC President**

# BVRC VE REPORT

From Don Cooper – KC7DC, BVRC VE Coordinator
September 10, 2022

## Congratulations!!!

**Rebecca Garrett – KI5NZR – Fort Smith**
**New General!**

**Charlie Stuttle – W5VYT – Fayetteville**
**New General!**

**Michael Kemper – KI5WRC – Fayetteville**
**New General!**

**Joe Buscemi – KI5YCJ – Locust Grove, OK**
**New Technician!**

***Test sessions are conducted each 2nd Saturday of the month:***
- ***2 pm at Bella Vista Fire Station #1, 103 NE Towncenter, Bella Vista***
- ***10 am at Shiloh Museum, 118 W. Johnson Ave, Springdale***

***Help promote the availability of the Club's monthly test sessions. Tell your friends and acquaintances!***


# Welcome New BVRC Members!!!

Sophie Calvi – KI5WVD – Bentonville
Fred Fanning – KI5WVN – Bentonville
Mark Morrison – KI5WVM – Bella Vista
Mike Wilkins – K5BI – Bentonville
Aaron Walter – Rogers
Topher Moore – KI5WUF – Bentonville
Grace Moore – KI5WUE – Bentonville
Michael Kemper – KI5WRC – Fayetteville
Patrick Harris – KI5MFA – Bella Vista
Irene Silveus – KI5WUP – Bella Vista
Aileen Ramsey
Randy Cooley – K5UTM – Fort Smith

## CHECK-OUT THE NEW BVRC ACTIVITIES AND OPERATING EVENTS CALENDAR ON THE BVRC WEBSITE ! ! !

From the BVRC Home Page, go to the *ON THE AIR* tab, then click/tap "BVRC Club Calendar". It already contains a fair amount of info, but it will have much more in the near future. You can find out when Club activities and exciting operating events will occur! Don't forget to also use the other informational tabs on the website. It's chocked full of info just for you!

# FOLLOW – UP NEWCOMER MEETING TO BE HELD

**A new feature of BVRC was added to the September meeting, with an inaugural Newcomer Question & Answer meeting. The Newcomer meeting began at 6pm, preceding the regular monthly meeting at 7pm. BVRC will host these meetings on as "as needed" basis, meaning they will not be a regular monthly occurrence, but will convene whenever a large influx of new amateur licensees to the area occurs. Follow-up meetings will be held when deemed necessary, and with the current large group of new hams, it is a pleasure for the Club to hold a second meeting. This was in true manifestation on the evening of September 1, when the attendance was so favorable, the participants requested another one! So, a second Newcomer meeting has been scheduled.**

***Elmer 911 Coordinator Vinson Carter – WV5C will once again be the host of the assemblage which will be at 6:00pm at the ALETA building in Springdale, on Thursday, October 6, preceding the regular monthly meeting at 7:00pm.***

**We look forward to having everyone back that attended the first meeting. A warm invitation is also extended to those who could not attend the first meeting, or those who have held their amateur radio license for less than a year, to come join-in on learning about our wonderful hobby and getting started on the right foot.**

**In the meantime, here is some valuable information for newcomers to digest until the October 6 meeting. This information is courtesy of Ron – K5XK:**

## *Video Resources For New Technician Licensees*
## *by Ron Evans, K5XK*

**The following list of YouTube video resources is by no means more than just a starting point, but it does have helpful "first step" suggestions for new Technician class licensees. In no particular order:**

**7 Steps to Take After Getting Your First Ham Radio License, by Jason / KC5HWB of the '*Ham Radio 2.0*' channel.**

**What Can a Beginner Do with an Amateur Radio License, by Jeff at '*KK6USY Ham Radio Advantures*' channel.**

**"Ham Radio 101" Series, by Herb, NZØF of '*Ham Radio 101*.' BVRC now has a newly appointed EmComm Coordinator (Chris Ebert, NAØD) who will help move us forward in this area. Meanwhile, NZØF offers some great suggestions for how you can prepare to get on the air and get your gear and antennas organized.**

**Ham Radio Tips for Beginners, by *Ham Radio for Non-Techies* (KI5NPL). Things we wish we had known when we got into the hobby, and have learned since then.**

**Radio Etiquette 101, by *'The New Ham' channel* (W4OLV). Includes nets and how to talk on the radio, etc.**

**My First Amateur Ham Radio Contact Attempt, by *Steve Chamberlin* channel. Demonstrates the potential for an unsuccessful attempt, especially if you are using a typical handheld (or "HT") radio with the tiny factory provided stubby, "rubber duck" antenna. (Remember, ¼ wave at 2 Meters is 19-inches!) Your mileage may vary!**

**Remember, transitioning from a new "licensee" into a full-fledged Radio Amateur is "a process." Don't get overwhelmed by trying to do too much. Take one 'bite or step at a time! Or, "inch by inch, it's a cinch!"**

*See you at the next Newcomer meeting, October 6!*


*(Editor's note: Fellow BVRC members, please join me in heartfelt one accord with Ron's comments that he submitted to The Signal. This is an excellent commentary and is very appropriate and fitting.)*

There are many times in an amateur radio club when certain individuals perform vital functions and services "in the shadows". They do it because they appreciate the club and love the hobby. They serve with the mindset of not being concerned as to whether they are identified or remembered for the work they did or the task they performed. Many times their efforts are under-recognized and under-appreciated.

I would like to take this opportunity to salute these devoted and enthusiastic individuals – past and present. It is because of them that Bella Vista area Radio Club has flourished into the vast alliance of northwest Arkansas hams that it experiences today:

***Steve Little-AB9YN*** – A few years ago, Steve was BVRC's videographer. Unfortunately, he was forced to withdraw due to his XYL's deteriorating health conditions. Steve's videography, editing, and DVD efforts allowed us to begin a public YouTube Channel which is enjoyed by not only our club members, but thousands of others worldwide. Thank you so very much, Steve.

***Bob Rainbolt-WBØAUQ and Mark Whittlesey-WØKYZ*** – Bob and Mark consistently assisted Steve by running video cameras, and setting up audio and lighting for our monthly meetings. Bob and Mark, thank you.

***Steve Werner-K5SAW and Fred Lemley-K5QBX*** – A HUGE word of appreciation goes to Steve and Fred for their monumental efforts with the club repeater. Not only with repairs and replacement, but they relocated it twice! They have spent a myriad of hours assisting members with antenna installations, and consulting with tower decisions. They have also been faithful in serving as Net Control Stations for the weekly 2-meter Legacy Net and 3830 Roundtable. Our hats are off to you, Steve and Fred.

***Glenn Kilpatrick-WB5L*** – Glenn is remembered for his years as club President, and his behind the scenes efforts to expand and organize the Club, which he did marvelously. More recently, Glenn's ongoing involvement ensures that our BVRC website continues to be a *world class* example as one of the best, constantly updated, and practical online ham radio resources *anywhere.* He is also an NCS for the Legacy Net. Glenn, we convey the deepest gratitude to you.

***Marc Whittlesey-WØKYZ*** – Over the many years of Marc's maintaining the Club treasury, no one knows the hundreds of membership applications that he has processed. He has managed a stellar record keeping system, as well as innovating and administering online dues payments giving members effortless options to renew their memberships quickly and easily. Marc, we thank you for being the outstanding Treasurer that you are.

***Vinson Carter-WV5C*** – Vinson took the helm of the ELMER 911 Program upon the passing of Paul Dixon - K5YH. Vinson has been exceptional in his position in providing answers or assistance from either himself, or forwarding the many radio related issues to one of our Club's Elmers to provide help in time of need. Vinson is also proactive from the standpoint of meeting and greeting newcomer hams to the Club and the hobby in general. Vinson, you are a valued commodity for the Club and we deeply appreciate you.

***Don Cooper-KC7DC*** – Don has done a remarkable job with the BVRC Volunteer Examiner Program, since taking the torch from WB5L several years ago. He and our host of faithful VEs quietly go about their business of monthly testing and expanding the Volunteer Examiner team, while introducing multi-site exam locations and significantly increasing the number of exams administered. We gratefully compliment you Don, Jessie, Ryan, Tom, Mark, Vinson, Rick, Joe, and Don B.

***Alan Katz-KEØQFO*** – Alan is one of a kind when it comes to unheralded service to the Club. He can always be depended on to cheerfully and reliably carry out endless 'behind the scenes' functions that add to the operation and enjoyment of BVRC. Thank you, Alan!

***Adnan Ademovic-KDØKCY*** – Adnan succeeded Steve-AB9YN in the position of Club Videographer. He does a stellar job serving as camera operator at Club programs, sometimes editing hours of video afterward, then uploading the finished work to the Club's YouTube channel. We thank you so very much Adnan for stepping forward to help promote BVRC in this vital position.

***Tom Northfell-W5XNA and Don Banta-K5DB*** - In an era with so few willing to lead, mega kudos and appreciation go to our President/Vice-President team of Tom Northfell-W5XNA and Don-K5DB. These guys have not only held the club together during 2+ years of a pandemic, but they have also innovated and managed to grow the Club in the face of obstacles and adversity. We will never know the extent of their routine activities: They organize monthly programs. They plan and administer licensing classes. They personally call and welcome new club members, and participate in so many things behind the scenes. Oh yes, after an exhaustive search, they are responsible for our new meeting venue through collaboration with ALETA instructor Gregg Harrison-KF5WAP, who arranged the providing of a new home for BVRC (*thanks, Gregg!!!*). And they somehow manage to stay active on and off the air, participating in BVRC nets, VE Exams, writing monthly newsletters, emails, and so much more. You guys ARE appreciated.

***Many more of you regularly contribute in seemingly countless ways.*** The list of BVRC members and their contributions is endless. Some of you are gifted in hospitality, preparing special treats and refreshments and serving as greeters for meetings. Others of you are invaluable with station set-up and tear-down at Field Day, provide security, recruit new Club members and serve as ambassadors promoting amateur radio in many ways. It by no means doesn't go unnoticed! Thank you!

BVRC members, this is your Club, and we need you. The opportunities are many! Don't just 'sit and soak' and be entertained. Ask how *you* can help, and thank those who are already serving.

Finally, thank you for making BVRC one of the great radio groups in America, and for making NWA the best area to enjoy our wonderful hobby!

*(Editor's addendum: Ron purposefully left a very important person out of this article – himself. Ron has been one of the veteran stalwarts of BVRC for decades, and has spent incalculable hours in service and leadership. It is only befitting that we include him here as well. Thank you so very much, Ron!)*


BVRC has three great nets, affording the opportunity to its members to enjoy getting to know each other, announcements of forthcoming radio & club events, and for newcomers to the hobby, becoming familiar with repeater net etiquette and protocol on two of the three club nets.

All this started around 29 years ago when a group of Bella Vista ham operators decided to form a repeater organization and put a Bella Vista repeater on the air. They named the assemblage the Bella Vista Repeater Group. Since that time almost 30 years ago, the Bella Vista Repeater Group (now the Bella Vista area Radio Club) has consistently held weekly 2-meter repeater nets to provide information, technical talk, operation experiences, and many other areas of interest and support for its members.

The two other BVRC nets – the 3830 KHz Roundtable on Sunday afternoons and the Wide Area Net on Tuesday evenings – are enjoying considerable success and participation. However, this issue of The Signal would like to feature and provide detailed information about, the *original* BVRC repeater net, now with a new net title, new protocol, and new Net Control Stations joining the ranks with some of our dear veteran net controllers:

The purpose of the Legacy 2-Meter Net is to provide a convenient, reliable, weekly on-air venue for BVRC members and guests to gather and exchange Club news, announcements, increase social interaction, and to hone basic emergency preparedness communications skills. The Net serves the NW Arkansas and SW Missouri area. Other goals include introducing and training newly licensed radio amateurs, to increase net familiarity & involvement, and to recruit and train future NCS (Net Control Station) volunteer leaders.

The 'Legacy Net' meets weekly at 8:00 p.m. local time on Wednesday evenings year-round, on the 147.255 club repeater (using positive transmit offset, and a PL tone of 162.2 Hz).

The net is the flagship gathering spot for the Bella Vista area Radio Club, its members and friends. It is the oldest, longest running net in Northwest Arkansas, initially launched in the early 1990s with the formation of the *Bella Vista Repeater Group*. "BVRG" thrived through 2014 when the group was reorganized, emerging as the **Bella Vista area Radio Club**.

The Net was designated **"The 2 Meter *Legacy Net*"** in the summer of 2022 after discussions about its relevance and possible redundancy, given the wider reach of the club's other nets (which includes the Sunday afternoon *"3830 Roundtable,"* and the Tuesday evening VHF-UHF *"Wide Area Net*," which uses the privately owned and operated NWA Skywarn Link System).

***How does the Legacy Net fit into the other BVRC Nets?***

Each net has its unique role. The W-A-N allows the club to communicate with more distant club members over a wide regional area, sometimes with low power HT radios. The 3830 Roundtable affords new General license class and above hams an opportunity to learn and refine their HF skills. But only the Legacy Net provides a 24/7 continuously maintained, proven reliable, Bella Vista centered, general purpose, club owned, 2-Meter repeater for northern Benton and surrounding counties.

Despite its northern location near the Arkansas-Missouri state line, the net enjoys participation from members and guests throughout Benton County, plus Springdale, Fayetteville, Lincoln, Winslow, and other locales. (Using exceptional locations and antennas, we have had guest check-ins from Crawford, Madison and Newton Counties in Arkansas, as well as Poteau OK, southwest of Fort Smith.)

The Legacy Net salutes, honors, and pays respect to the many founding club members and Silent Keys who funded, built, and maintained the 147.255 Legacy repeater for more than three decades, while serving our communities and recruiting and mentoring countless new hams, thus expanding our hobby.

This longstanding legacy depends on your faithful commitment and continued involvement. Mark your calendar for each Wednesday evening at 8 pm and join-in on the fellowship and camaraderie whenever you can.

**NET CONTROL STATIONS**

Ron Evans, K5XK (Coord.)
Glenn Kilpatrick, WB5L
Tom Thibeault – KN4SLP
Jan Hagan, WB5JAN
Dana Hill, W5DGH
Robert Hill, K5NZV

**Alternate Net Control Stations:**

Tom Northfell, W5XNA
Don Banta, K5DB


# The Par Electronics 6-Meter OA-50 Antenna

## By Mike Schroeder – NØALJ


I would like to share about a keen 6 meter antenna that I recently ordered and had a chance to try out. It is the Par Electronics OA-50.

I followed the instruction sheet, watched the YouTube Assembly Video and easily assembled my OA-50 and waited the next 6 meter band opening. I mounted my OA-50, up on a section of aluminum antenna mast that I bought at Lowes, and screwed into my fence post on the side of the house. I connected my existing HF RG-8X mini-foam coax and was on the air – Plug 'N Play! SWR was a perfect match, no tuning required! If it had been required, adjustments are easily made. On the afternoon of Saturday, 08/06/2022, the 6-Meter band opened and lasted into the late night hours! I made lots of contacts on 6-Meter FT8 on 50.313 MHz. When I called CQ, I had 3 stations answer my CQ at the same time. One station gave me a +24 signal report running just 40 Watts. I was working east and west coast stations plus Canada and Mexico with it. I am very pleased with my PAR OA-50. It's priced right with great build quality.


This is an antenna that is used for horizontal polarity (i.e. 6 Meter CW/SSB/FT8) and can handle 160W. It weighs only 1.5 Lbs. so is perfect for base station, portable, mobile, and rover contest operation due to it's small size of 41" X 44". The antenna's isosceles triangle shape yields a near perfect omnidirectional pattern, much wider bandwidth and considerably less rain detuning. This antenna is approximately 30% longer than a half wave and so offers gain over traditional square and round loops. A built in matchbox converts feedpoint impedance to 50 ohms and matches unbalanced coaxial feedline to a balanced antenna preventing feedline radiation (RF back into the shack).

To continue with your own investigation of this great little antenna visit:
http://www.parelectronics.com/omnis.php

# The Vital Use of Phonetics in Amateur Radio Voice Communication

By Don Banta – K5DB

When you engage in a two-way amateur wireless conversation for the first time in your life, you will probably come across some words that you've never heard before,

You may even mistake those words to be some kind of secret code! These words, in fact, are not a secret code (and by the way, conversation in secret code language is not allowed in amateur radio communication). They are actually words that are internationally used to convey plain language conversation and are known as *phonetics*.

There are many different terms for the phonetic alphabet used in ham radio: The ICAO phonetic alphabet, the military phonetic alphabet, the NATO phonetic alphabet, and the ITU phonetic alphabet. All these different names basically refer to the same phonetic alphabet, as shown below left.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | Alfa | N | November |
| B | Bravo | O | Oscar |
| C | Charlie | P | Papa |
| D | Delta | Q | Quebec |
| E | Echo | R | Romeo |
| F | Foxtrot | S | Sierra |
| G | Golf | T | Tango |
| H | Hotel | U | Uniform |
| I | India | V | Victor |
| J | Juliett | W | Whiskey |
| K | Kilo | X | Xray |
| L | Lima | Y | Yankee |
| M | Mike | Z | Zulu |

Now I will say this, and in case you didn't know – there is nowhere in the FCC rules that states an amateur radio operator MUST use phonetics. However, there is a section in the rules that interestingly does mention them.

Rule 97.119 addresses the requirements of proper station identification. In sub-paragraph (b) it addresses the required method by which the callsign must be sent, using the different modes available in our hobby.

Concerning voice transmissions in sub-sub-paragraph 97.119 (b)(2) it states that station identification on any voice mode must be made:
**"By a phone emission in the English language. Use of a phonetic alphabet as an aid for correct station identification is encouraged."**

Why would the governing communications body of this country add such a clause encouraging the use of a phonetic alphabet?

The answer is actually pretty obvious: A ham radio operator has to face many hurdles during an ongoing communication. There may be static, band noise, signal fading, interference from other stations

operating at close frequencies, local noises in the radio room, local rf interference (line noise), unusual voice accents of the other operator, improper pronunciation of words, and many other variables. During these many difficulties, it has been proven – again and again – that ***the use of phonetics*** improves the intelligibility and, most importantly, the accuracy of communication.

For example, in phonetics the letter 'D' is represented by the word 'Delta', while the letter 'B' is represented by 'Bravo'. To distinguish 'M' from 'N', hams use the words 'Mike' and 'November' respectively.

The phonetic alphabet is useful when calling distant stations, when the band is crowded, or when for any reason the station called is expected to have difficulty in copying voice signals. For example, 'radio' can be spelled out using the phonetic alphabet as "Romeo-Alpha-Delta-India-Oscar". A person who is accustomed in listening to such phonetics gets habituated in spontaneously writing down the exact word from those phonetics! They feel more comfortable at writing down a message ***spelled-out in phonetics*** rather than *the simple mentioning of letters.*

Even though this phonetic alphabet has been regularly challenged by those who think they have a better idea, it is *still used* in ham radio today. And, it is the phonetic alphabet that is still universally considered to be <u>THE WAY</u> to identify letters in radio communication. The fact that practically every communications radio operator in the entire world references these exact twenty-six words when identifying letters, truly makes the worth of this system priceless!

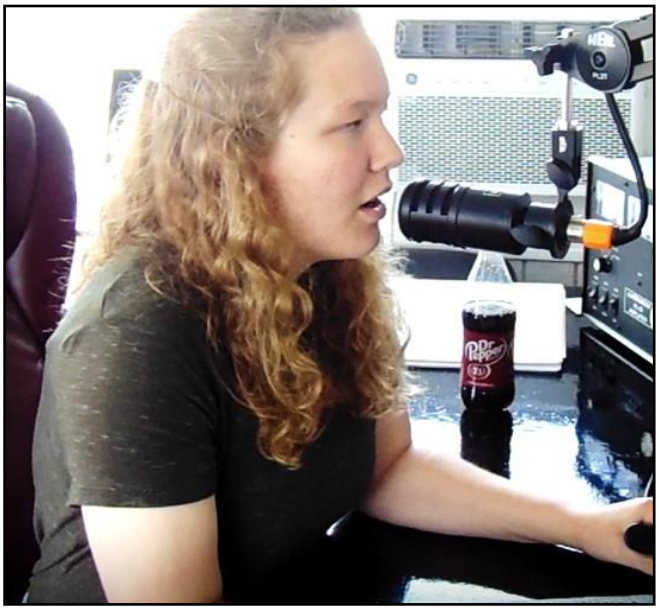
Perhaps an even more invaluable reason for adopting a specific universal phonetic alphabet has to do with a universal characteristic of the human brain……

In researching this subject, I discovered some very interesting information. – Numerous studies have shown that all humans have a phenomenal natural ability to instantly fill-in missing sounds in known words with expected information, even when those sounds are not there!

This ability is often termed *Phonemic Restoration*. It happens without effort, it happens without your knowledge, and you've done it all of your life.

For example, if someone says the word "Whiskey" (for "W") on the radio, and the band happens to fade out completely eliminating the "s" in the word, the receiving station will usually never even notice it! You don't hear "Whi-(blank)–key". But, your mind thinks that it clearly heard the word "Whiskey" even though the "s" was never actually heard. This phenomenon enables you to easily recognize familiar words, both on the radio when listening conditions are poor, and also in routine everyday life. It's pretty amazing when you think about it.

Using phonetics improves on-air communication *hands-down*, whether you're working stateside stations, DX stations, contests, operating in Worked-All-States nets, DX nets, traffic nets, local HF nets, and VHF/UHF nets whether simplex or through a repeater.



And concerning that last one – VHF/UHF communication – I have heard many times that it is not necessary to use phonetics on a local simplex QSO or a repeater net. I politely, but firmly, disagree with this doctrine.

Whether you're operating on the low bands of 160- or 80-meters, or on the high bands of 2- or 70-centimeters, if listening conditions are poor, then they are poor. For example: A mobile (in motion) station's signal can fade in-and-out through a repeater just as it has the potential to do on HF frequencies. The use of a phonetic alphabet *exponentially* aids the operator in accurately understanding callsigns and/or special words in a in a transmission. Even if conditions are good, phonetics STILL ensure that important elements of a transmission are correctly received and understood. The use of phonetics is also *paramount* in emergency communications.

In my many years of repeater and HF net operation – both as a net participant and as a Net Control Station (NCS) – I have experienced hearing a station check-in to a given net, but *not* using phonetics.

The NCS (it's happened to me and others many times) – by honest mistake – misconstrues one or more letters of the station's callsign that is checking-in, due to one or more of the potential problems we listed at the beginning of this article. Then, wasted time ensues as the station checking-in and the NCS go back-and-forth in an attempt to correct the callsign of the station checking-in. This causes participating net stations to have to stand by while this cluttering is untangled, the NCS gets somewhat frustrated, the progress of the net is stymied, and other various negative aspects occur. In addition, I have sometimes heard the station checking-in get offended because their callsign was not recognized correctly. And, do you know how this dilemma is usually resolved? – With phonetics.

The station that was checking-in actually shouldn't be getting upset at the NCS in a scenario such this, as they were, in fact, the root cause of the problem – *failure to use phonetics*. Had they done so, their check-in would have taken place like clockwork, and the net would have proceeded smoothly and in a timely manner.

The use of phonetics is to *avoid* confusion – not to *create* confusion!

Many letters of the alphabet sound similar unless very clearly heard – "B" may be heard as G or D or V. "S" might be heard as F or X. The word 'bed' may be heard as 'bet' or 'pet'. But, if we spell it out with phonetics – Bravo-Echo-Delta – the confusion is instantly and easily eliminated!

All veteran DXers, contesters, and Net Control Stations use phonetics to safeguard against incorrect callsigns and other important information from being erroneously entered into the logbook or net report.

Many of you have operated in Field Day. Did you ever notice that when you – participating in a BVRC Field Day, for example – call "CQ Field Day, CQ Field Day, this is November 5 Bravo Victor Alpha", then standby for a call from other participating stations, 95+% of the time the replying station will answer your "CQ" with their callsign *phonetically*. These are either veteran operators or a somewhat newcomer to the hobby that has been schooled by a veteran operator/elmer. They're doing it the right way and ensuring that you have their callsign correctly in the log. In a situation such as Field Day, or any on-air situation, with accidental [or even deliberate] carriers, fading band conditions, crowded frequencies, static, and "white noise", ***YOU NEED PHONETICS***.

So, let me genuinely encourage you to develop and discipline yourself to always use phonetics in voice communications – in *any* situation and on *any* band.

# BVRC CLUB ACCESSORIES!

*Show you're a proud BVRC member with club accessories from our supplier, Embroidered Memories!*

- ***Club Caps***
- ***Key Tags***
- ***Mouse pads***
- ***Name Badges***
- ***Club License Plates***
- ***Ceramic Mugs***
- ***Luggage/Bag Tags***

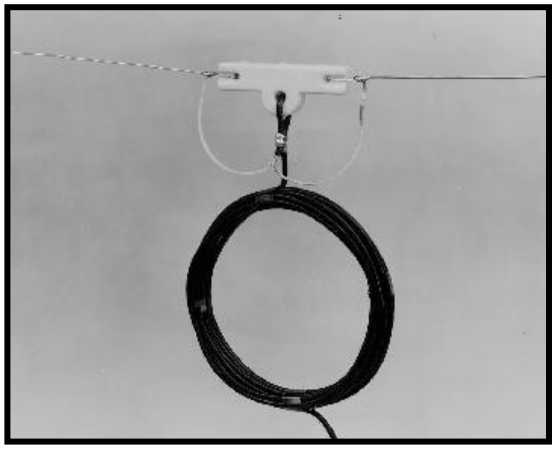

**To order your personalized club product, click here !**

# A SIMPLE RF COAX ANTENNA CHOKE

From the antenna connect point – which would be either the raw 'hot' and 'ground' leads of your coax, or a PL-259 connector (if your antenna is equipped with a SO-239 female connector) – from the end of the coax, measure back about 12-16 inches. From this point, form a loop with the coax that is 8 inches in diameter. Continue winding additional loops until you have 8 loops, and 8 inches diameter *inside* of the loops. Over the years, this has gained the old adage, "The 8-8 RF Choke".

Simple enough? You can then secure the loops with heavy duty plastic wire ('zip') ties placed at 12-3-6-and -9 o'clock on the loops. Some hams like to add extra protection from weather by wrapping the ties with heavy-duty electrical tape, and some wrap the entire collection of loops as seen in the photo to the left. The initial 12-16 inch straight run of coax before you begin you 8" diameter circle of 8 loops is used to (of course) secure both sides of the loop to the antenna in the case of a beam, vertical, dipole with center support, etc.

Then use 2 or 3 more of the **heavy-duty** plastic wire ties to mount the looped coax directly to the pole, mast, tower, etc. Then continue supporting the rest of the coax down the structure. When you are finished, your installation should look something like the photo at right. ----- You have just made and installed your first RF antenna choke!



For free-hanging dipoles, a smaller and lighter gauge coax such as RG-58 or RG-8X, would be more advisable than the larger RG-8 to assist the antenna in sustaining the weight of the choke.

The way the choke works is very simple: A small amount of RF radiates from the shield wire in the coax. The RF emitting from the antenna surrounds the antenna with a very large pattern filled with RF. Some of it gets on to the coax and can travel down the entire length of the coax. Also, if there is a slight mismatch enough to cause even just a 1.5 : 1 SWR, some of that reflected RF comes back down the surface of the coax.

The RF choke creates an electromagnetic field on the choke's surface, and within the donut hole. This field attracts the stray RF and chokes it off before it travels down the coax, and it is dissipated within the electro-magnetic field. Hence the term "choke".

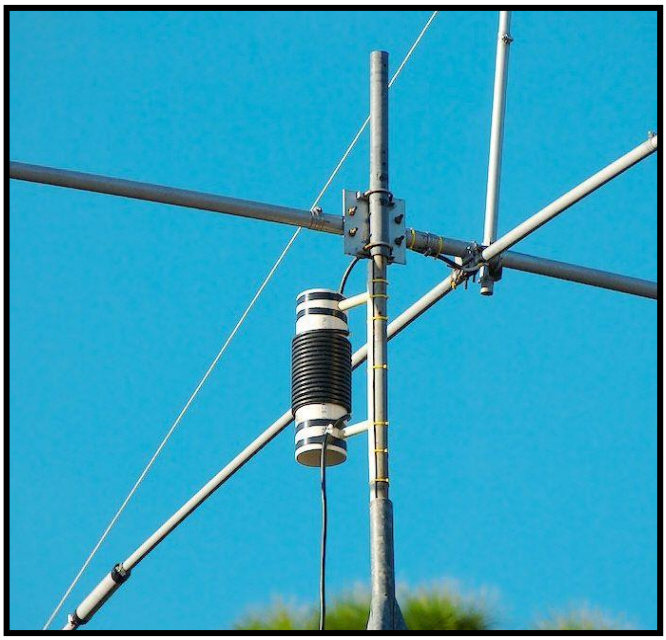
In some ways, it almost acts like a ground radial and slightly reflects the RF radiated from the antenna to a more upwards angle sending more of the signal towards the horizon where it belongs, and not into your radio room. But unlike a ground radial, the choke does not tune the antenna to any specific frequency. So, it is good for all frequencies from 160 through 6 meters. Vertical antennas that cover more than one band and do not require ground radials, benefit greatly from an RF choke. As the antenna is used on different bands and across a wide range of frequencies within those bands, the SWR can vary quite a lot. As the SWR goes up, more stray RF likes to seek out the source of the RF (your radio) by the shortest and quickest route possible (the coax). The RF choke prevents that from happening which helps your SWR a little and keeps RF feedback out of your radio room.

If you're strapped for cash, and at least for the present cannot afford a quality 1:1 or 4:1 balun which do an excellent job in this area, this simple choke does a pretty fair job for not that much extra money.

Dipoles, beams, verticals, slopers, and single-band antennas can benefit a lot from an RF choke for all the same reasons – every antenna of every design still emits stray RF, and it can travel along the coax.

**A VERY IMPORTANT NOTE THAT NEEDS TO BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD:**

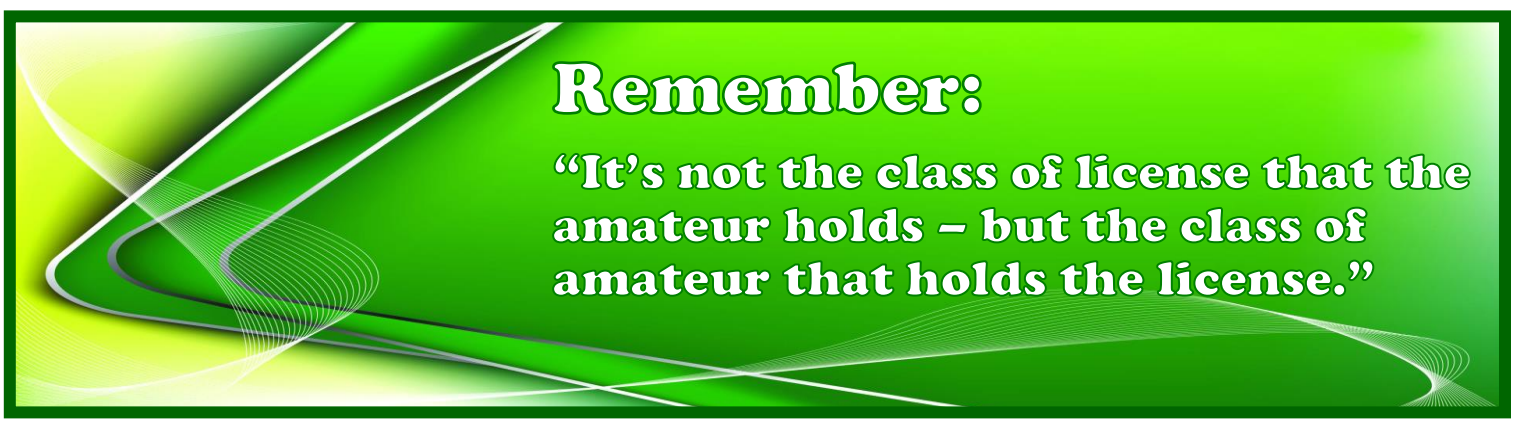
*An RF choke **will not prevent** the reflected RF caused by a **high SWR** from damaging your radio!!! Reflected RF that is caused by an impedance mismatch and that is reflected back to your radio through the **center** conductor of the coax, can still hurt your equipment. Never assume that a choke will cure high SWR problems that you might incur. An RF choke only stops the stray RF on the **surface** of the coax from traveling down its length that causes RF feedback. Removing the stray RF can in many cases help the SWR, but only just a little. **Only correcting the impedance mismatch of the coax and antenna can fix your SWR problems.***



Now you know how to build and install an RF choke, the easy simple way.

You can wrap the loops side-by-side around an 8" plastic coffee can, PVC, etc. This doesn't hurt at all, and you may like the aesthetic appeal as in the picture at left. However, doing this doesn't increase the RF choke's choking level at all. It's just a simple RF choke to stop stray RF from traveling down the coax.

If you can count 8 loops, read the number 8 on a ruler or tape measure, and understand how a wire tie works, you'll be able to build your own RF choke with ease. *Just remember to add 17-20 feet to your coax purchase to cover the extra length needed for your choke, because each 8-inch loop uses just over 2 feet of coax (about 26 inches).* (8 x 26 = 208 inches, or about 17¼ feet.)



# CARVING OUT TIME FOR HAM RADIO

Many times, after a person acquires their first amateur radio license – the Technician – if you ask them how much time they are spending on the air since acquiring their ticket the answer varies from "not much" to "zero".

This is not uncommon. Lots of people seem to get a ham radio license and then do very little with it. One reason for this is that they don't consider how much time the hobby really can consume, due to the many areas that amateur radio encompasses.

They get their ticket because it seems like "a cool thing to do", but then they have to carve-out some time to actually become a ham radio operator. Setting up a station takes time and then there is the operating time, of course. Carving time out of busy schedules is a challenge.

So, if you're a busy person, how do you make time for ham radio? Here are four points that might help you:

1) Schedule it. Set aside a specific time during which you're going to devote to ham radio. Don't let that time get preempted.

2) Designate a place in your home for ham radio. Having to set up your radios or dig-out your tools every time you want to operate or build something is not much fun and wastes a lot of time. Having a "shack" and a workspace designated for your projects will let you spend more time on the fun stuff.

3) Partner up. Arranging to work with another ham will make it harder to put-off ham radio for some other activity. Besides, it's a lot of fun to do things with other hams. If you're a newly licensed ham, find an Elmer. There really are plenty around who would be willing to help you.

4) Create a project plan. Setting up an amateur radio station is no small feat. Breaking it down into smaller chunks will make it seem more manageable and attractive to you, and you'll get a feeling of accomplishment when you meet your in-between goals.

Having said all this, enjoy your hobby but remember……that's what it is – a hobby.

It should always come AFTER – and never be substituted for – faith, family, community, and country.

# STRAYS . . . . . .

**Several BVRC members from NW Arkansas attended the quarterly meeting of the Arkansas DX Association on Sept. 17 in Russellville. From L to R: Don Banta – K5DB, Dennis Tune – W9DCT, Tom Northfell – W5XNA, Steve Norris – W5KI, Mark Whatley – K5XH, Chuck Korzendorfer – KM5G, ADXA President Joel Harrison – W5ZN, Kathy Bromley – WQ5T, Jay Bromley – W5JAY, and Bill Kennamer – K5FUV**

**THE SIGNAL** newsletter is published monthly for members of the Bella Vista area Radio Club. BVRC disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy, or the content of articles published herein. The opinions expressed are solely those of the authors. BVRC neither necessarily endorses nor opposes said opinions, brand names, products, businesses, organizations, etc. Submission of any amateur radio related articles is encouraged and welcomed. Submit your article to the editor: Don Banta-K5DB, 3407 Diana St., Springdale, AR 72764 (or E-mail to: arsk5db@gmail.com) for publication in THE SIGNAL. The deadline for articles is the 10th of each month.