

NARS NEWS

The Northwest Amateur Radio Society

Houston, Texas

March 1990

HOW TO BECOME A RADIO OFFICER IN THE MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND IS TOPIC FOR MARCH 16 MEETING

"Ahoy there you scurvy dogs! Batten down the hatches and prepare to be boarded!" Just kidding there mate. That opening line is to get you in the mood for salt water spray slapping you in the face as you bark out orders on a marine ship-to-ship radio while your ship is plowing into heavy seas at 20 knots.

We take you this month to the Indian Ocean on a LASH vessel. To be more specific, we take you aboard as a civilian radio officer on a ship of the U. S. Navy Military Sealift Command (MSC), stationed out of Diego Garcia, a small island located in the middle of the Indian Ocean. You are responsible for communications within a fleet of ships that transport, for the U. S. Navy, military supplies, vehicles, equipment, and food, the backbone of the military. You are well versed in emergency procedures, message handling, Morse code, and electronics. You are ready to respond under pressure to many demands as the fleet gets underway.

Don Mayhall, N5DM (VQ9DM on Diego Garcia), has been a Radio Officer for the MSC for about a year now. He will inform us about what it's like being a marine radio officer. The MSC is a civilian group that contracts out to the U. S. Navy to transport materials in peacetime as well as in wartime. Don will tell us about the requirements for becoming a radio officer, the life style, and MSC's mission. When Don is not working out of the radio room aboard a ship on the high seas, he is here in Houston working at Madison Electronics.

Battle stations! Calling all Hams to

REEKING REGATTA RENAMED

The BUFFALO REGATTA, formerly called the REEKING REGATTA, is seeking our assistance again this year to furnish radio communications for the event. This is the Buffalo Bayou Coalition's Canoe and Kayak Race to raise funds for beautification of the bayou. It is scheduled for Saturday, April 7th, to begin at the San Felipe Road crossing and to end at the Sabine Street bridge. This is slightly shorter than in past years. Operators will be stationed along the way to monitor progress and report emergencies or other needs. NARS members and others have enjoyed working this interesting activity for the past four years and it will no doubt be great fun again this time. We will be using 2-meter FM; if you would like to participate, please call Ken Harlan, KA5AKG, at 370-2950 or let him know at the upcoming NARS meeting so we can get organized.

FEBRUARY MEETING RECAP

Dr. Al Zermeno, KK5W, from the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, briefed us on research being done on the effects of low frequency RF radiation on cancer. Also being studied are the effects of the earth's magnetic field. Al is spearheading an effort to have the Houston Ham community get involved in a Special Event Station during the upcoming Economic Summit in Houston. We told him that NARS stands ready to assist in that effort. A door prize, the "UHF Compendium - Parts 1 and 2" (courtesy of Madison Electronics), was won by Jerry Smith, W5NKZ.

man your stations, and don't any of you sea dogs miss the meeting this month. Meeting time is 8:00 p.m. Be sure to come early and enjoy some eyeball QSOing with other local Hams.

*** * * PROPAGATION * * ***
by ROY HRADILEK, AD5Q

Equinox time is here again, and this means we will have some nice openings deep into Asia. There are rumors of an expedition to a very rare country in a part of the world that is often hard to reach: Bangladesh. If this operation shows, we can expect good propagation windows on two bands: 15 & 20. Look for a 20 long path opening around sunset and short path at sunrise. On 15, this remote part of the world should be workable for much of the day, especially from morning to noon.

10 Meters: This band will only be good for another month or so. The most active DX paths (Europe and Japan) will gradually be attenuated by seasonal absorption. Signals will get weaker and the activity will move to 15 & 20. Solar flux numbers have been lower lately, and the sunspot cycle may have peaked. Enjoy 10 meters now, because it won't last.

15 Meters: 15 will improve, as it will now remain open in the evening. Since the daytime paths won't deteriorate until mid-summer, many DX windows will stay open longer. This is especially true of the polar paths. Tune carefully around mid-day for exotic Asian stuff. Around this time of the year the band still closes early at the northern latitudes, so signals skip over Siberia to points further south.

20 Meters: This band is open all night again, and prime time evening hours bring us a sunrise peak sweeping over Russia. Springtime is the peak season for working the USSR, even at the bottom of the sunspot cycle. Long path is still good, and an interesting path to watch for at this time of year is the northerly path to the Indian Ocean coast of Antarctica (e.g. 4K1F).

40 Meters: Activity on 40 peaked during winter and is moving to higher frequencies, even though propagation will remain excellent. 40 should not be left out of your tuning routine, even during the summer. The less activity there is on a band, the less time it takes to check it.

*** * * FAR OUT * * ***
by JACK DOUGLAS, KA5DNP

The launch of STS-35, on which Payload Specialist Dr. Ron Parise, WA4SIR, will operate 2-meter voice and "standard" packet, is now scheduled for May 9, 1990. Another shuttle flight involving SAREX (Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment) will follow about 2 months later and will include ATV and SLOW SCAN as well as voice and packet. This will be STS-37 on which ATLANTIS Pilot Ken Cameron, KB5AWP, will be the Amateur Operator.

For these SAREX operations the ARRL is the lead organization for information, education, and support. AMSAT is the lead for technical operations. JSC ARC is handling in-flight equipment and planning.

Both missions will be at an inclination of about 28.5°. Since this puts most of the USA out of range during astronaut availability periods and/or school hours, covering the USA will require a complex relaying system.

AMSAT is putting together a worldwide ground station network involving Australia, South American, Mexico, Africa, etc. These areas will use amateur satellites, HF links and commercial facilities to relay to the Key Station, W5RRR, at Johnson Space Center. From there relays are planned to WA3NAN at Goddard, MD, W6VIO at JPL in California and ARRL HQ. In addition, a Teleconference Net is planned to feed repeaters around the country and thus, classrooms!

The key role of W5RRR is obvious. This flight is planned for 10 days and the packet station on board COLUMBIA will operate for up to 12 hours a day. To operate W5RRR for all the hours involved is going to require lots of volunteer Ham hours. If you can devote some time to this major local effort please let me know so I can put you on the list (Phone 358-5172, or via packet @ WA4EWV). An operating schedule will be developed as we gain information as to who can help when!!

NARS NOTES

- CONGRATULATIONS to Jack Douglas, KA5DNP, who has received word from ARRL that they have confirmed 101 QSL cards for his DXCC - Satellite
- CONGRATULATIONS to Henry del Valle, N5MSO, on his General Class upgrade
- DEEP CONDOLENCES to Dianne Pankau, KB5DGD, on the loss of her father, Bill Johnson, K0ABK, who became a silent key Sunday, March 4
- VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to work the March of Dimes WalkAmerica 1960 Area walk on April 29th. To offer help please call Bob Welch, KE5IC, at 376-4814
- NARS DUES ARE DUE! If you haven't paid your dues, this will be the last copy of the NARS News you will receive by mail. A new NARS Roster will issue next month

ANOTHER BEAM IN THE SKY

After the NARS breakfast on Saturday, February 24, the myriad assembled at the QTH of Dick Rooney, W5VHN, to take down his TH33JR. and raise a new Mosely TA33M. Ed Hinds, KB5AEL, took the tower in his stride, while Tom Roraback, KF500, fussed about the cheap coax, corrosion, and soldered on PL-259's while sitting on the roof. Aply assisted by Scott Byrd, N5KEU; Allen Majeski, WA5REJ; and Ken Edinborgh, W5BKK; the operation was squired by Bob Welch, KE5IC, while Dick, W5VHN, ran around trying to find tools. Another attempt will have to be made because the SWR ran 2:1 to 3:1 on 21 MC. Never-the-less, thanks to all for a job well done! (A new run of coax and new PL-259's solved the problem! Ed.)

de Dick Rooney, W5VHN

NARS NOVICE COURSE ALIVE AND WELL

The current NARS Novice Course is progressing according to plan with the final session, including the Novice Test, scheduled for Monday, March 26th.

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The Northwest Amateur Radio Society
is an ARRL Special Service Club
* * ARRL Club No. 2120 * *

NARS BULLETIN BOARD

NARS MEETS the third Friday of each month at the Cypress Creek EMS Bldg. 16650 Sugar Pine Lane (beneath the water tower) which is one block east of Kuykendahl and two blocks south of FM 1960. Meeting time: 8 p.m. Eyeball QSO's: about 7:30 p.m.

NARS BREAKFAST every Saturday 8 a.m. Strack Farms Restaurant, located at 5707 Louetta Rd. - Informal ragchew.

NARS NEWS is published monthly by Northwest Amateur Radio Society
Send news to Jim Clarke, N5FIX
Editor, 1842 Knoll, Houston 77080
Tel: 984-9028

BOB WELCH, KE5IC
7811 Theisswood Rd.
Spring TX 77379

NARS NETS

NARS RAGCHEW - MONDAY 8 p.m.
28.444 MHz (Ed, KB5AEL)

NARS INFO - WEDNESDAY 8 p.m.
146.06/66 MHz (Ken, KA5AKG)

EMERGENCY NETS

Northwest Harris County ARES
TUESDAY 8 p.m.
146.06/66 MHz (Scott, N5KEU)

Harris County OEM RACES
SUNDAY 7 p.m.
146.34/94 MHz (Bob, K5HUT)

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT NARS, PLEASE
CALL KEN EDINBORGH, W5BKK, 376-7660

NARS REPEATER FREQUENCIES

146.06/66 MHz 449.375/444.375 MHz

NARS DIGIPEATER

Freq. (145.07 MHz) Alias (NARS)
Call (W5BKK-1)